



De Wilde pinx.

Neagle sc.

MISS FARREN as PENELOPE.

I will not take it on such conditions.

Londn. Printed for J. Ball, British Library, Strand, June 3 1792.

CANNIBALS

COMEDY,

AS ACTED BY

SHIRLEY AND C. JOHNSON.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL,

DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

LONDON :

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British-Library, STRAND,
BOOKSELLER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

M DCC XCII.



MISS T. BARNARD PRINTER

Does not take on such conditions.

Printed at Ball, British Library, Strand, June 3. 1792.

THE
GAMESTERS.

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THE GAMESTERS.

THIS Comedy is an alteration from SHIRLEY and C. JOHNSON by GARRICK. It is a busy Play, and contains that sort of involved incident, without which the finest dialogue and the purest sentiment is but thrown away upon an audience.

The Critics have been divided touching the propriety of certain alterations in the present piece. The moderate opinion seems to be, that, from the pruning hand of our great Master of stage effect, it acts better, but that something is subducted from the pleasure of the closet perusal, given by the original.

It has unquestionably scenes of considerable smartness, and incidents that interest very divertingly; but yet the language is generally rugged—it is an antique, but the original die was never of the purest execution.

PROLOGUE.

Written and spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

*WHENE'ER the wits of France take pen in hand,
To give a sketch of you, and this our land;
One settled maxim through the whole you see——
To wit—their great superiority!
Urge what you will, they still have this to say,
That you who ape them, are less wise than they.
'Tis thus these well-bred letter-writers use us;
They trip o'er here; with half an eye peruse us;
Embrace us, eat our meat, and then—abuse us.
When this same play was writ, that's now before ye,
The English stage had reach'd its point of glory!
No paltry thefts disgrac'd this author's pen,
He painted English manners, English men;
And form'd his taste on Shakspeare and old Ben.
Then were French farces, fashions, quite unknown;
Our wits wrote well, and all they writ their own:
These were the times when no infatuation,
No vicious modes, no zeal for imitation,
Had chang'd, deform'd, and sunk the British nation.
Should you be ever from yourselves estrang'd,
The cock will crow, to see the lion chang'd!*

*To boast our liberty is weak and vain,
While tyrant vices in our bosoms reign:
Not liberty alone a nation saves;
Corrupted freemen are the worst of slaves.
Let Prussia's sons each English breast inflame;
O be our spirit, as our cause, the same!
And as our hearts with one religion glow,
Let us with all their ardours drive the foe,
As Heav'n had rais'd our arm, as Heav'n had given the
blow!*

*Would you rekindle all your ancient fires?
Extinguish first your modern, vain desires:
Still it is yours, your glories to retrieve;
Lop but the branches, and the tree shall live:
With these erect a pile for sacrifice!
And in the midst—throw all your cards and dice!
Then fire the heap; and as it sinks to earth
The British genius shall have second birth!
Shall, phoenix-like, rise perfect from the flame,
Spring from the dust, and mount again to fame!*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

WILDING,	-	-	-	-	Mr. King.
HAZARD,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
ACRELESS,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Egan.
LITTLESTOCK,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Macready.
SELLAWAY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Davies.
BARNACLE,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Quick.
Nephew,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Edwin.
DWINDLE,	-	-	-	-	Mr. C. Powell.
Page,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Simmons.
Box-keeper,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Rock.
Servant,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farley.
CARELESS,	-	-	-	-	-
Drawer,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Ledger.

Women.

Mrs. WILDING,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Pope.
PENELOPE,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Merry.



THE GAMESTERS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter WILDING and PENELOPE.

Wilding.

WHAT need you be so coy now ?

Pen. Pray collect

Yourself; remember what you are, and whose:

You have a virtuous gentlewoman; think

Upon your faith to her.

Wild. Think of a fiddle-stick !

While you put me in mind of what I am,

You quite forget yourself. My wife, I allow,

Your kinswoman far off; to whom, a widow,

Your father left you, with a handsome fortune;

Which, by her marriage, I have in possession,

And you too: therefore, as you hope to be

In due time worth a husband, think upon't.

I can deserve respect; then wisely use me,

As you would keep me.

Pen. 'This is but a trial

Of my strength; for I know you have more charity,
(Should I consent) than shipwreck your own honour.
But take heed, sir, how you proceed to jest
With frailty; lest too much disordering
Your good thoughts, you forget, and by degrees
Lose your own innocence.

Wild. I jest! you'd have me swear;
And yet you should not think it such a wonder
To love, sure. Come, shake of this frost; it spoils
thee;

Your nature should be soft and flexible.
Perhaps, thou think'st—I do not love thee heartily :
I know not how to give thee better testimony,
Than by offering myself to thee : if my wife die,
(As ten to one she's not immortal) we
May couple t'other way.

Pen. What argument is this
To assure the truth of your affection to me,
That break your vows to her ?

Wild. Oh ! great argument,
An' you observe : she was a widow when
I marry'd her; thou'rt a young maid, and handsome:

Pen. Can you be so ungrateful, then, to punish
Whom you should reward? Remember, sir, she
brought you

That wealth you have; took you from nothing——

Wild. There's reason then for nothing I should love
her.

Hang her estate! I was held a proper man;
And in that point deserv'd her, an' she had millions :

An' I were free again, I would not draw
I' th' team of marriage, for ten subsidies ;
Not to command a province.

Pen. Yet, you said,
Were your wife dead, you'd marry me.

Wild. Only thee, and nobody else.

Pen. 'Twere dangerous to have many.

Wild. To have one is little less than madness. Come,
wo't promise ?

Enter Mrs. WILDING, behind.

Pen. What ?

Wild. A'course you know my meaning.

Mrs. Wild. I do not like this whispering: why with
her

So close in parley ?

Wild. Wo't thou do this feat for me ?

'Tis finish'd in a pair of minutes.

Pen. Yes, upon one condition.

Wild. What condition ?

Pen. That your wife give consent ; you shall then
command me. [Exit.

Wild. I'll undertake to go a pilgrimage
To Jerusalem, and return sooner. Would
I did not love thee, love thee infinitely——
That's all ; 'two'not do——My wife ! I hope
She has not eaves-dropp'd us. What pity 'tis
She cannot find the way to heav'n. I should not
Trouble her in haste. These wives will have no con-
science,

But stick to us everlastingly. Now, lady,
How did your monkey rest last night ? you look
As you had not said your prayers yet ; I won't disturb
you.

Mrs. Wild. Pray, sir, stay ; let me but know
Some reason, why you use me thus unkindly ?
If I have been guilty of offence, I am not
Past hope, but with the knowledge of my error
'Tis possible I may amend and please you.

Wild. I do not like you.

Mrs. Wild. You did marry me.

Wild. Yes, I did marry you ; here's too much re-
cord for't.

I would there were a parson to unmarry us !
If any of our clergy had that faculty,
He might repair the old, and build as many
New abbeys through the kingdom, in a twelvemonth.
Shall I speak truth ? I never much affected thee :
I marry'd thee for thy soul's sake, not thy body :
Yet I do not hate thee. Witness, I dare kiss ;
Hold thee by the hand, sleep in the same house,
Nay, in the same bed sometimes ; but——

Mrs. Wild. What, sir ?

Wild. You have a scurvy quality, wife ; I told you
on't.

Mrs. Wild. Once more ; and I'll correct it.

Wild. You are given to be jealous. I cannot
Ramble abroad in gentlemen's company
Whole days, lie out a nights, but you suspect
I am wanton. 'Tis ill done ; it becomes no modest

Woman that loves her husband, to be jealous,
 Whate'er she sees or hears; mend, mend this fault,
 You do not know how it may work upon me.
 Some wives will bid their husband's leverets welcome;
 Nay, keep house together; but you ne'er did it:
 Know their own chamber, and not come forth
 Till they be sent for. These morals I have read
 Before now, but you put them not in practice;
 Nor, for aught I perceive, have disposition to't.
 Therefore I'll take my course.

Mrs. Wild. To shew I can
 Be obedient to my griefs; from this time, sir,
 I wo't not urge with one unwelcome syllable
 How much I am neglected; I'll conceal it
 Too from the world: your shame must needs be mine.
 I see you do not love me; where your heart
 Hath plac'd a worthier thought, let it dwell ever;
 Freely pursue your pleasures; I will have
 No passion that shall mutiny; you are,
 And shall be lord of me still.

Wild. I like this, if it be no disguise.

Mrs. Wild. Do not suspect me;
 I would swear by a kiss, if you'd vouchsafe it;
 You shall not keep a servant that shall be more humble.

Wild. And obedient to my will?

Mrs. Wild. In all things.

Wild. I'll try you then.

[*Aside.*

But if I bring home a mistress——

Mrs. Wild. I'll be patient.

Wild. What if there be one
Already that does please me? will you not
Repine, and look awry upon's, when we
Make much of one another?

Mrs. Wild. So you will but sometimes smile on me
too, I'll endeavour.

Wild. Well said: this may do good upon me; as
I find you prompt in this, I may consider
Other matters: to tell you true, I like
Your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. How!

Wild. How? why as a man should like her; but
I find her cold and peevish. How she may
Be brought about, I know not. 'Twould shew well,
And be a precedent for other wives,
If you would put your help to't.

Mrs. Wild. Goodness bless me!

Wild. One woman with another can do more,
In such a cause, than twenty men. I do not
Wander, you see, out of the blood; this will
Be a way to justify your obedience.

Mrs. Wild. You shew a tyrant now; and, stead of
framing
My soul to patience, murder both.

Wild. Nay, nay, child, if you are out of humour at
trifles, I must leave you. [Going.

Mrs. Wild. Stay, sir.

Wild. Not now, my dear—when you are cool again
you may expect me. [Exit singing.

Mrs. Wild. This is not to be borne ; my patience is worn out ; and, one way or other, I must have some respite to my tortures. [Exit.

SCENE II.

The Street. Enter WILDING.

Wild. I have gone too far, a conscience—this may spoil all ; and, now I think upon it, I was a coxcomb to discover any party. I must deny it again, and carry things more closely. But, let me see, why do I use this wife of mine thus terribly ? She gave me all—ay, that all's the devil ! my desires are satisfied, and I have not a grain of inclination left ; variety is the thing—in eating, music, wine, or women ; nothing but variety gives the palate to them all : now, my wife is always the same tune, the same dish, the same dull bottle of port ; and, to sum up all, the same woman—'twill never do. How now, Will ?

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. How now, Will ! is that all ?
Look up, and ask me a question like a man ;
What, melancholy ?

Wild. No, no ; a toy, a trifle.

Haz. That should be a woman ; who is't thou art thinking on ?

I have been of your counsel—

Wild. I was thinking—o' my wife.
We have had a dialogue; come, thou know'st my
bosom.

Haz. When dost mean to use her well?

Wild. I know not; but I have offer'd fair con-
ditions.

She is very confident I do not dote
Upon her beauty: I have told her, sirrah,
I love her kinswoman.

Haz. Y'are not mad?

Wild. The world's deceiv'd in her; she'll give me
leave

To ramble where I list; and feed upon
What best delights my appetite.

Haz. He that has
An ambition to be strangled in his sleep,
May tell his wife he loves another woman.

Wild. But I was not content with this. Because
The other wench was somewhat obstinate,
I must needs urge my wife to mollify
And mold her for my purpose.

Haz. And she consented?

Wild. No, 'twould not do:
This went again her stomach, and we parted.

Haz. Next time you see her, look to be presented
With your mistress' nose for this. Dost think a woman
Can be so patient, to know her rival
I' th' same roof, and leave her eyes to see thee
Again? I am sorry for thee.

Wild. I am confident

She dare not: but for all that, would I had
Been less particular.

Haz. Come, I love thee well;
But not thy wit, to carry things no handsomer:
You must unravel again, and make your wife
Believe you did but try her.

Wild. Pr'ythee drop the subject; don't set my
teeth on edge with talking so much about my wife.
Canst not see by my wry faces, that 'tis holding the
phial to my nose, after I have taken the physic. Pr'y-
thee no more of her. Now tell me, what brought thee
this way?

Haz. I was going to meet old Barnacle.

Wild. Barnacle! what can such opposites possibly
do together? He wants you to beat somebody for
him.

Haz. Faith, Jack, I have no superfluous valour to
dispose of——I have just enough to defend myself
from the impertinence of some, and the villany of
others.

Wild. A gamester by profession, Will, should be
always ready to draw his sword, as the circumstances
of play and the support of his honour may require it.

Haz. Yes, there are gamesters who are ever draw-
ing their swords to support their honour, and of con-
sequence are for ever fighting.

Wild. And they find their account in't: for gentle-
men in general had much rather submit to have their
pockets picked, than run the risque of having their
throats cut: but, pr'ythee, Hazard, how do you es-

cape these fire-drakes; for you are pretty open and direct in your censures upon 'em.

Haz. What will they get by quarrelling with me? they know I dare fight, and that I hate a scoundrel; and whenever madam Fortune is pleased to jilt, and strip me, I always fall upon her bullies; and as they don't love fighting for fighting sake, they call me an odd fellow, and let me alone.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha! but to return to Barnacle——What is become of that genius his nephew?

Haz. Just now returned from college, as great a genius as he went——He has been exposing himself these two years at the university, in the characters of the rake and the scholar, and now is come up to make the same figure in town.

Wild. Is he not an insufferable blockhead?

Haz. Yes, an insufferable blockhead; but not absolutely ignorant. His tutor has got words into him without ideas; so his folly and scholarship set one another off to a most ridiculous advantage.

Wild. What Greek and Latin he has, I suppose, lies in his head, as his uncle's money does in the chest, without being of the least use to himself, or any body else.

Haz. You are mistaken, sir; his uncle will spare no expence to make his hopeful kinsman a fine gentleman.

Wild. Then the matter is out——He comes to bind him apprentice to you.

Haz. Your humble servant.

Wild. His debauchery will become him as little as his learning; so that in time we shall see the hopeful youth not only contemptible but infamous.

Haz. Is not that the old gentleman yonder, coming this way?

Wild. It is, indeed; and therefore I shall leave you to your entertainment. Squeeze a few hundreds out of him if you can—I must back to my kinswoman—I can't rest without her—Shall I see you at the old place this afternoon? [Exit.

Haz. You shall—I wish I could get this Penelope out of his hands. She's a charming girl, and, though she has not quite money enough to be made a wife of by one of no fortune, yet she has too many good qualities to be made a strumpet of by such a fellow as Wilding—He will not succeed, surely—What should be the business, that old Barnacle has desired my conference? 'tis not to lend me money sure—He's here.

Enter BARNACLE.

Barn. Master Hazard!

Haz. I was coming to you, sir.

Barn. I am fortunate to prevent so great a trouble; There is a business, sir, wherein I must desire your favour.

Haz. Mine? command it, sir.

Barn. Nay, I'll be thankful too; [Shewing a purse of money.] I know you are
A gentleman.

Haz. That should incline you to think
I am not mercenary.

Barn. I beseech you, sir,
Mistake me not; rewards are due to virtues,
And honour must be cherished.

Haz. What's your purpose?
Pray clear my understanding.

Barn. To be plain, sir,
You have a name i' th' town for a brave fellow.

Haz. How, sir! you do not come to jeer me?

Barn. Patience, I mean you have the opinion
Of a valiant gentleman; one that dares
Fight and maintain your honour against odds.
The sword-men do acknowledge you; the bailiffs
Observe their distance; all the swaggering puffs
Strike their top-sails. I have heard them in the streets
Say—There goes daring Hazard; a man careless
Of wounds; and though he has not had the luck
To kill so many as another, dares
Fight with all them that have.

Haz. You have heard this?

Barn. And more, and more; mistake not,
I do not all this while account you in
The list of those are called the blades, that roar
In brothels, and break windows, that swear dammees,
“To pay their debts; and march like walking ar-
mories,
“With poniard, pistol, rapier, and battoon,”
As they would murder all the king's liege people,
And blow down streets: no, I repute you valiant

Indeed, and honoured ; and come now, without
More ceremony, to desire your favour ;
Which, as you are a gentleman, I hope
You'll not deny me.

Haz. Though your language
Be something strange, yet because I think you dare
not

Intend me an abuse, I do not question it.
Pray to the point ; I do not think you're come
To have me be your second.

Barn. I am no fighter ;
Though I have seen a fence-school in my days,
And cracked a cudgel ; yet I come about
A fighting business.

Haz. You would have me beat somebody for you.

Barn. Not so, noble Hazard : yet
I come to intreat a valiant courtesy,
Which I am willing to requite in money ;
I have brought gold to give you payment, sir ;
'Tis a thing you may easily consent to,
And 'twill oblige me ever.

Haz. Be particular.

Barn. Then thus ; you are not ignorant I have a
nephew, sir.

Haz. You have so.

Barn. One that's like
To be my heir ; the only one of my name
That's left : and one that may in time be made
A pretty fellow.

Haz. Very well ; proceed.

Barn. You know, or you imagine, that I have
A pretty estate too.

Haz. You're held a main rich man, sir ;
In money able to weigh down an alderman.

Barn. I have more than I shall spend, now I come
close ;
I would have this nephew of mine converse with gentlemen.

Haz. And he does so.

Barn. I'll not pinch him in's allowance ;
The University had almost spoiled him.

Haz. With what ?

Barn. With modesty ; a thing, you know,
Not here in fashion : but that's almost cured ;
I would allow him to be drunk——

Haz. You may, sir.

Barn. Or any thing, to speak him a gentleman.

Haz. With your favour, sir, let me be bold a little
To interrupt you ; were not you a citizen ?

Barn. 'Tis confessed, sir.

Haz. It being a thriving way,
A walk wherein you might direct your nephew,
Why d'ye not breed him so ?

Barn. I apprehend ;
And thus I satisfy you : we that had
Our breeding from a trade, cits as you call us,
Though we hate gentlemen ourselves, yet are
Ambitious to make all our children gentlemen :
In three generations they return again ;
We for our children purchase land ; they brave it

I' th' country, beget children, and they sell;
 Grow poor, and send their sons up to be 'prentices:
 There is a whirl in fate. The courtiers make
 Us cuckolds; mark, we wriggle into their
 Estates; poverty makes their children citizens,
 Our sons cuckold them. A circular justice!
 The world turns round. But once more to the pur-
 pose.

Haz. To your nephew.

Barn. This nephew of mine I do love dearly;
 He is all my care; I would be loth to lose him;
 And to preserve him both in life and honour
 I come to you.

Haz. Now you come to me indeed, sir.

Barn. What shall I give you, sir, to let him——

Haz. What?

Barn. Pray, be not angry.

Haz. By no means.

Barn. There is no such security i' th' world;
 I'll pay for't heartily.

Haz. For what?

Barn. What shall I give you, troth, and let him——

Haz. What?

Barn. Beat you, sir.

Haz. How?

Barn. Nay, do not, sir, mistake me: for although
 I name it coarsely, I desire it should be
 With your consent, not otherwise: my nephew
 Is raw, and wants opinion; and the talk
 Of such a thing, to have beat a gentleman

That all the town's afraid of, would be worth
In's credit, heaven knows what ! Alas, you cannot
Blame a kind uncle, to desire all means
To get his nephew fame, and keep him safe ;
And this were such a way !

Haz. To have me beaten.

Barn. You're i' th' right ; but do not misconceive
me.

Under your favour, my intention is not
He should much hurt you : if you please to let him
Quarrel, or so, at tavern, or where else
You shall think fit ; and throw a pottle-pot——

Haz. At my head ?

Barn. Yes, or a bottle ; still under your correction ;
Only that some of your acquaintance, and
Gentlemen may take notice, that he dares
Affront you, and come off with honour handsomely.
Look, here's a hundred pieces ! tell 'em i' th' ordi-
nary ;

They're weight, upon my credit : play 'em not
Against light gold : this is the prologue to
My thanks ; besides my nephew shall in private
Acknowledge himself beholden.

Haz. A hundred pieces ! I want money.

Barn. Right.

Haz. You give me this to let your nephew beat me ?

Barn. Pray, take me with ye ; I do not mean he
should

By beating hurt you dangerously. You may
Contrive the quarrel, so that he may draw

Some blood ; or knock you o'er the pate, and so forth ;
And come off bravely : this is all.

Haz. Well, sir ;

You do not mean, you say, he should endanger
My life or limbs ; all you desire, if I
Mistake not, is to get your nephew credit ;
That being fleshed, he may walk securely, and be held
Valiant, by gaining honour upon me.

Barn. You understand me right.

Haz. I'll put it up ;
Pray send your nephew to me ; we'll agree.

Barn. Agree, sir ? You must quarrel, and he must
beat you,
Else 'tis no bargain.

Haz. Not before
We have concluded how things shall be carried.

Barn. I must desire your secrecy, and——

Haz. Here's my hand.

Barn. And there's my money.

Haz. Your nephew shall be a blade.

Barn. Why there's ten pieces more, 'cause you
come off
So freely ; I'll send him to you.

Haz. Do so ; why this, if the dice favour me, may
bring all
My lands again. Be sure you send him ; but
No words ! for your nephew's credit.

Barn. Mum—I thank you heartily. [Exit.

Haz. Be there such things i' th' world ? I'll first to
the tavern ;

There I am staid for : gentlemen, I come ;
I'll be beat every day for such a sum. [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Mrs. WILDING and the Page.

Mrs. Wilding.

WHERE'S your master, boy ?

Page. I know not, mistress.

Mrs. Wild. Come nearer, sirrah ; you are of your
master's

Council sometimes. Come, be true in what
I shall desire, and I shall find a time for your reward.

Page. How d'ye mean, mistress ?

We pages meet rewards of several natures :

This great man gives us gold, that lady gloves,

T'other silk stockings, roses, garters : but

The lady and mistress whom we serve in ordinary,
Reserves another bounty for our closeness.

Mrs. Wild. I see you can be a wag ; be but just to
me, and secret——

Page. As your looking-glass,

That in your absence cannot be corrupted

To betray your complexion.

Mrs. Wild. What private mistresses does Master
Wilding visit ?

Page. Who, my master ?

Alas, forsooth ! d'ye think he lets me know ?

Mrs. Wild. Nay, nay, dissemble not.

Page. I hire a coach
 Sometimes or so, but ride always i' the boot :
 I look at nobody but the passengers.
 I do not sit i' the same box at plays with them.
 I wait at tavern, I confess, and so forth ;
 And when he has supp'd, we must have time to eat too :
 And what should I trouble my conscience
 With being too officious till I am call'd for ?
 'Tis true, he waits upon the ladies home ;
 But 'tis so dark, I know not where they dwell ;
 And the next day we have new ones, 'las ! mere
 strangers

To me, and I should be unmannerly
 To catechize them. If now and then there be
 Any superfluous, cast waiting-woman,
 There be so many serving-men about her,
 I cannot come to ask a question ;
 And how should I know any thing ?

Mrs. Wild. I see you are old enough for vice.

Page. Alas, forsooth !
 You know 'tis ill to do a thing that's wicked,
 But 'twere a double sin to talk on't too,
 If I were guilty ; beside, forsooth, I know
 You would ne'er trust me again, if I should tell you.

Mrs. Wild. Thou art deceiv'd, it shall endear thee
 more.

Page. I must beseech you
 To be excus'd. My master is my master ;
 My feet are at your service, not my tongue :

I would not forfeit my honour for the world.

Mrs. Wild. Hence, thou old in villany !
But 'tis in vain to chide. Leave me, and bid
Mistress Penelope come hither.

Page. Yes, forsooth—She is so frumpish. [Exit.

Mrs. Wild. I know not which way to begin. To me
He has betray'd he loves her. Here she is ;
Now to the trial.

Enter PENELOPE.

Pen. Will you be sad still, cousin ? Why d'ye
grieve ?

Be kinder to yourself. Trust me, I weep,
When I am alone, for you.

Mrs. Wild. Sorrow and I
Are taking leave, I hope ; and these are only
Some drops after the cloud has wept its violence.
Were one thing finish'd, I should ne'er be sad more ;
And I cannot despair to know it done,
Since the effect depends upon your love.

Pen. My love ! 'Tis justice you command my ser-
vice.

I would I were so happy.

Mrs. Wild. Make me so,
By your consent to my desire.

Pen. Pray, name it.

Mrs. Wild. I only ask your love ; pray, give it me.

Pen. My love ! Why do you mock my poor heart,
which

Pours all it has upon you ? You're possess'd of that
already.

Mrs. Wild. You examine not
The extent of my request ; for when you have
Given what I ask, your love, you must no more
Direct it as you please : the power's in me
How to dispose it.

Pen. And you shall for ever.
I have no passion that shall not know obedience to you.

Mrs. Wild. Your love, by gift
Made mine, I give my husband. Do you love him ?

Pen. I always did.

Mrs. Wild. But in a nearer way :
Love him as I do ?

Pen. I understand you not ; or if you do
Suspect I cherish any lawless flame——

Mrs. Wild. Thou art too innocent ; be less, and do
An act to endear us both. I know he loves thee ;
Meet it, dear coz ; 'tis all I beg of thee.
I know you think it a most strange request ;
But it will make me fortunate.

Pen. Grief, I fear,
Hath made her wild—D'ye know what you desire ?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, that you love my husband. “Mo-
desty
“ Will not allow me to discourse my wish
“ In every circumstance.” But think how desperate
My wound is, that would have so strange a cure.
He'll love me then : and, trust me, I'll not study
Revenge, as other wives perhaps would do,
But thank thee : and indeed an act like this,

So full of love, with so much loss and shame too,
For mine and his sake, will deserve all duty.

Pen. I have no patience to hear more ; and could
I let in a thought you meant this earnest,
I should forget I knew you : but you cannot
Be fallen from so much goodness. I confess
I have no confidence in your husband's virtue ;
He has attempted me, but shall hope sooner
To leave a stain upon the sun, than bribe
Me to so foul a guilt. I have no life
Without my innocence ; and you cannot make
Yourself more miserable than to wish it from me.
Oh, do not lose the merit of your faith
And truth to him, tho' he forget himself,
By thinking to relieve yourself thus sinfully !
But sure you do but try me all this while.

Mrs. Wild. And I have found thee pure ; be still
preserv'd so.

But he will straggle farther——

Pen. Cherish hope,
He rather will come back. Your tears and prayers
Cannot be lost.

Mrs. Wild. I charge thee, by thy love,
Yet be rul'd by me. I'll not be so wicked
To tempt thee in a thought shall blemish thee :
But as thou wouldst desire my peace, and his
Conversion, if his wantonness last with him,
Appear more tractable ; allow him so much
Favour, in smile and language, that he may not
Think it impossible to prevail at last.

Pen. This may engage him farther, and myself to a dishonour.

Mrs. Wild. It shall work our happiness,
As I will manage things. 'Tis but to seem:
A look will cost thee nothing, nor a smile,
To make his hopes more pleasing. On my life,
Thou shalt be safe both in thy fame and person.
Will you do this for my sake?

Pen. I'll refuse no danger, if I suffer not in honour,
To do you any service.

Mrs. Wild. I have cast it
Already in my brain; but do not yet
Enquire my purpose. As his folly leads
Him to pursue you, let me know, and I'll
By fair degrees acquaint you with my plot,
Which, built on no foul ends, is like to prosper.
And see how aptly he presents himself—
Pr'ythee, seem kind, and leave the rest to me.
He shall not see me. [Exit.

Enter WILDING.

Wild. How now, coz? Was that
My wife went off?

Pen. Yes, sir.

Wild. Let her go. What said she to thee?

Pen. Nothing.

Wild. Thou art troubled!

Pen. Pray, to your knowledge, sir, wherein have I
Done injury to you or her?

Wild. Has she abus'd thee ?
I'll chastise her.

Pen. By no means, sir—I steal away your heart,
And meet at stol'n embraces.

Wild. Does she twit thee ? I'll kick her like a foot-
ball,
Say but the word.

Pen. By no means think upon't. I have forgiven her.
You sha' not, sir, so much as frown upon her ;
Pray, do not, as you love me. We must study
A more convenient revenge.

Wild. How is this ?
I pr'ythee, if she has been peremptory,
Which was none of our articles, let me instruct thee
How we shall be reveng'd.

Pen. Sir, I acknowledge
The growth and expectation of my fortune
Is in your love ; and tho' I would not wrong her—
And yet, to have my innocence accus'd,
Is able to pervert it. Sir, your pardon ;
I have been passionate. Pray, love your wife.

Wild. No, no, I'll love thee ; indeed, indeed, I will.
Is she jealous ?

Pen. You know she has no cause.

Wild. Let us be wise, and give her cause : shall's,
coz ?

Pen. Sir, if I be a trouble to your house,
Your breath shall soon discharge me. I had thought
The tie of blood might have gain'd some respect.

Wild. Discharge thee the house ! I'll discharge her,

And all her generation, thee excepted ;
And thou shalt do't thyself ; by this thou shalt.

[*Kisses her.*]

Ha ! she comes to with more freedom : this is better
Than if my wife had pleaded for me. [*Aside.*] Pen,
Thou shalt be mistress, wilt thou ? Come, thou shalt :
She's fit for drudgery.

Pen. Oh, do not say so !

Wild. Then I wo' not. But I love thee for thy
spirit,

'Cause thou wilt be reveng'd. Punish her jealousy
The right way : when 'tis done, I would choose
To tell her : it may kick up her heels another way.

Pen. Tell her what ? You make me blush.

Wild. No, no, I'll tell nobody ; by this hand, I
will not. [*Kisses it.*] Stay, stay, I have a diamond will
become this finger : 'tis in my drawer above ; I'll
fetch it straight.

Pen. Oh, by no means !

Wild. 'Tis thine, 'tis thine, my girl ! my soul is
thine ! [*Exit.*]

Pen. Indeed, Mrs. Wilding, this is going a little
too far for you—There is something so like reality
in all I have been doing, that I am more than half
in a fever with it already. This playing with fire is a
very foolish thing ; but, tho' I burn my fingers, I
must go thro' with it.

Enter WILDING, with a Ring.

Wild. Here it is, Pen, as sparkling as thyself.

Wear it, and let my wife stare out her eyes upon't.

Pen. I wo' not take't on such conditions.

Wild. Take it on any, take it on any——

She's come about.

[*Aside.*

Enter Page.

Page. Sir, Master Hazard desires your company at the tavern: he says there are none but gentlemen of your acquaintance, Mr. Careless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway.

Wild. He must excuse me—Get you gone.

Pen. Stay, stay, boy—As you love me, go, sir—Your master will come. [*Exit Page.*] Have no suspicions that I wish your absence. I'll wear your gift, and study to be grateful.

Wild. I'll leave my boy behind; and should my wife be set on gossiping this afternoon, pretend thou, girl, some slight indisposition to keep at home; and when she's gone, let me but know it, and I'll leave the happiest run of dice to catch a moment with thee.

Pen. I want not such strong proofs of your regard; I will not stop your fortune.

Wild. Then I'll not leave you now.

Pen. You must, indeed you must—When I can oblige you, I shall not prove ungrateful. [*Exit.*

Wild. Both wind and tide are for me!—No talk now of wife's consent; I'll not remove my siege—When I can oblige you—Oh, 'twas sweetly spoken!

She is my own! I have her sure, quite sure!—Now to the tavern, and drink to the purpose. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The Tavern. HAZARD, ACRELESS, LITTLESTOCK, SELLOWAY, and Drawer, discovered.

Haz. More wine.

Acr. Right, noble Hazard; here's to thee.

Haz. Let it come, boy; fill it me steeple high; I am in the vein of mirth, and I ha' cause, as you shall see in due time, gentlemen. Mr. Littlestock, thou art dreaming o' the dice.

Sell. He's melancholy.

Litt. Who, I?

Haz. I'll play the farrier, then, and drench thee for the sullens. A health to all our mistresses; we have had them single, let's shuffle them now together. [*Drinks.*] Come, let us join a little music to our wine, and if his melancholy stands them both, I'll lay all the money in my pocket, which is no small sum, that he has a two-penny cord about him, and will make use of it before to-morrow morning. Come, Tom, I'll give you the gamester's apology, and if these are only qualms of conscience, this song will warm him like a dram.

SONG.

*Ye youths of this town,
Who roam up and down,
To eat and to dress all your aim ;
Be not squeamish or nice
To make friends of the dice,
All the world plays the best of the game.*

*See how each profession
And trade thro' the nation
Will dupe all they can without shame :
Then why should not we
In our turn be as free ?
All the world plays the best of the game.*

*The lawyers of note
Will squabble and quote,
And learnedly plead and declaim ;
Yet all is but trick
The poor client to nick,
For the law plays the best of the game.*

*To gain his base ends,
Each lover pretends
To talk of his darts and his flame,
By which he draws in
The poor maiden to sin,
Who is left with the worst of the game.*

*The prudish coy maid,
With hypocrisy's aid,
To foolish fond man does the same:
When the fool's in the net,
The prude turns coquette,
And her spouse has the worst of the game.*

*The patriots so loud,
Who roar to the crowd,
And mount to the summit of fame!
Their mouths soon will shut,
Then they shuffle and cut,
And at court play the best of the game.*

*The heroes so stout
At home make a rout,
And swear the proud foe they will tame;
But alter their tones
When they think of their bones,
And for them play the best of the game.*

*Then since the great plan
Is cheat as cheat can,
Pray, think not my notions to blame;
In country and town,
From courtier to clown,
All the world plays the best of the game.*

Sell. 'Tis joyous, faith!

*Haz. I wonder Jack Wilding stays——He's come
in the nick.*

Enter WILDING.

Wild. Save you, save you, gallants; may a man come i' the rear.

Haz. Give him his garnish.

Wild. Y'are not prisoners for the reckoning, I hope?

Haz. For the reckoning!—Now ye are all together, gentlemen, I'll shew you a wonder. But come not too near; keep out o' the circle. Whatsoever you think on't, this is an hundred pounds—Nay, not so close; these pictures do shew best at distance, gentlemen. You see it—*Presto.* [*Puts it up.*

Wild. Nay, let's see it again.

Haz. Like to your cunning juggler, I ne'er shew my trick but once. You may hear more hereafter. What think you of this, Mr. Acreless, Mr. Littlestock, and Mr. Sellaway?

Acr. We do not believe 'tis gold.

Haz. Perish then in your infidelity.

Wild. Let me but touch it.

Haz. It will endure, take my word for it. Look you, for your satisfactions—No gloves off—you have devices to defalck—Preserve your talons and your talents, till you meet with more convenient gamesters.

Litt. How cam'st by it?

Wild. Thou'dst little or none this morning.

Haz. I have bought it, gentlemen, and you, in a mist,

Shall see what I paid for it. Thou hast not drank yet,
Wilding :

Ne'er fear the reck'ning, man—More wine, you
varlets!

Wild. But hark thee, hark thee, Will, didst win it?

Haz. No ; but I may lose it ere I go to bed.

Dost think't shall musty? What's an hundred
pounds?

Sell. A miracle! But they are ceas'd with me.

Acr. And me too. Come, let's drink.

Wild. No matter how it came, Will: I congratu-
late

Thy fortune, and will quit thee now with good
News of myself. My coz, I told thee of,
Is wheel'd about: she has took a ring of me.
We kiss'd and talk'd time out of mind.

Haz. I know it:

My almanack says 'tis a good day to woo in;
Confirm'd by Erra Pater, that honest Jew, too.
I'll pledge thee.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, there are two gentlemen be-
low enquire for you; and, Mr. Wilding, this note for
you.

Wild. For me!

Haz. What kind of men are they?

Draw. One's somewhat ancient; I heard him call
The other nephew. [Exit.

D

Wild. *Victoria! Victoria!* Will, a summons from the island of love—my wife's absent, and Pen and I shall toy away an hour, without fear or molestation.

Haz. Have a care, Jack: I love pleasure as well as thou; but to obtain it at the expence of every virtue, is rather paying too dear for it.

Wild. What, a moralizing gamester! Ha, ha, ha! 'tis envy, Will, attacks thee in the shape of conscience; and was I like the foolish dog in the fable, to catch at the shadow, and drop my tit bit, thou wouldst be the first to snap it up.—But I have not time to laugh at thee—I must away—the wench calls, and I must fly. [Exit.

Haz. This affair perplexes me—How little do we know of women! had I had fortune enough to have ventured upon marriage, I would have fixed upon this cousin of his, preferable to the whole sex; but the devil is in them, and will peep out one time or other—I don't know why, but I am vexed at this affair—I'll never go to Wilding's house again.

Enter Drawer.

Draw. Mr. Hazard, the gentlemen without are impatient to see you. [Exit.

Haz. I beg their pardon, I had forgot them. I do caution you, gentlemen, beforehand, to be fair conditioned; one of them, the nephew, is of a fiery constitution, and sensible of any affront; let this character prepare him for you.

Acr. Bring him not hither.

Haz. There is a necessity in it; I would not for a hundred pound but entertain him, now he knows I am here. [Exit.

Sell. Why must we keep company with his disagreeable acquaintance?

Enter HAZARD again, with BARNACLE, his Nephew, and DWINDLE.

Acr. This is old Barnacle.

Lit. And that's his nephew; I have been in his company.

Sell. Is this the youth Hazard prepared us for? How busy they are!

Haz. You could not wish better opportunity. These are all gentlemen of quality. I'll call him cousin first, if it please you, To endear him to their acquaintance.

Bar. I'll not be a witness of your passages myself: these will report as much as I desire. Sir, if you be beaten, I am satisfied.

Neph. But, dy'e hear, uncle, are you sure you have made Your bargain wisely? They may cut my throat When you are gone; and what are you the wiser? Dwindle, be you close to me.

Haz. I warrant you, we shall do things with discretion, If he has but grace to look and talk courageously.

Bar. He may be valiant for aught I know;

Howsoever, this will be a secure way
To have him thought so, if he beat you soundly.

Neph. I do not like the company;
But I have drank wine too, and that's the best on't;
We may quarrel on even terms. Look to't, Dwindle.

Dwin. Here's your safeguard. [*Shewing his stick.*]

Haz. As I am a gentleman—be confident—
I'll wait on you down, sir.

Bar. By no means; let him beat you to purpose,
sir.

Haz. Depend upon me.

Bar. And when he has beat you, sir, I must beg
another favour.

Haz. Oh! command me, sir.

Bar. Courage, you know, not only keeps the men
in awe, but makes the women admire.

Haz. What, must I pimp for your nephew too?

Bar. Lack-a-day! No, no, no; though I'll let
him have his swing, too—but I must marry him forth-
with; and I have one in my eye, that will fit him to
a tittle.

Haz. Who is the happy creature you have destined
for him?

Bar. No less a jewel, I assure you, than your
friend's ward, Penelope; there's money and beauty
enough! Will you put in a word for him?

Haz. Both to the lady, and my friend, and imme-
diately too.

Bar. Only to clear the way a little, Mr. Hazard;

I have a tongue myself, and can use it too, when once it is set a going.

Haz. I have heard of you at the hall.

Bar. Nay, and my nephew can speech it too ; ay, and has your repartees too, when he's a little in drink, and he sha'n't want for that.

Haz. You're in the right, Master Barnacle, not to let the hinges rust for want of a little oiling.

Bar. I have another use for you, if you'll introduce us.

Haz. I'll do it.

Bar. But don't forget to be beaten, though.

Haz. Do you suspect my honour ?

Bar. I don't, I don't—Well, nephew, mind your hits—Mr. Hazard, yours—I am full of joy!—and, nephew, draw blood, do you hear ? [Exit.

Neph. Bye, uncle.

Haz. Come, sir : pray, gentlemen, bid my kinsman welcome ; a spark that will demand your friendship.

Sell. His kinsman!—You are welcome.

Acr. He has power to command your welcome.

Litt. If I mistake not, I have had the happiness to have been in your company before now.

Neph. Mine, sir ?—D'ye hear, what if I quarrelled
[Aside to Hazard.

With him first ? 'twill prepare me the better.

Haz. Do as you please ; that's without my conditions.

Neph. I'll but give him now and then a touch; I'll
close

Well enough, I warrant you.—You been in my
Company, sir?

Litt. Yes, and at the tavern.

Neph. I paid the reck'ning then.

Litt. You came into our room——

Neph. Tell me of coming into your room!
I'll come again. You're a superfluous gentleman.

Litt. How's this?

Haz. Let him alone.

Litt. Sir, remember yourself.

Neph. I'll remember what I please, and forget what
I remember. Tell me of a reckoning! What is't?
I'll pay't; no man shall make an ass of me,
Farther than I list. I care not a fiddle-stick
For any man's thund'ring; he that affronts
Me, is the son of a worm, and his father's a whore.
I care not a straw, nor a broken point
For you. If any man dare drink to me,
I won't go behind the door to pledge him.

Acr. Why here's to you, sir.

Neph. Why, there's to you, sir. Twit me with
coming into a room! I could find in my heart to
throw a pottle-pot—I name nobody—I will kick any
man down stairs, that cannot behave himself like a
gentleman. None but a slave would offer to pay a
reck'ning before me. Where's the drawer? There's
a piece at all adventures. He that is my friend, I

care not a rush ; if any man be my enemy, he is an idle companion, and I honour him with all my heart.

Sell. This is a precious humour. Is he used to these mistakes ?

Litt. Your kinsman gives you privilege.

Neph. I desire no man's privilege : it skills not whether I be kin to any man living.

Haz. Nay, nay, cousin, pray let me persuade you.

Neph. You persuade me ! for what acquaintance ?
Mind your business, and speak with your taylor.

Haz. An' you be thus rude——

Neph. Rude, sir ! What then, sir ?——Hold me,
Dwindle.

Sell. Nay, nay, Will, we bear with him for your
sake,
He is your kinsman.

Haz. I am calm again.
Cousin, I am sorry any person here
Hath given you offence.

Neph. Perhaps, sir, you
Have given me offence. I do not fear you.
I have knock'd as round a fellow in my days.

Haz. And may again——

Sell. Be knock'd ! A pox upon him ; I know not
what to make of him.

Haz. Let me speak a word in private, sir.

Neph. I can be as private as you, sir.

Haz. Strike me a box o' th' ear presently. [*Aside.*

Neph. There's my hand on't—— [*Strikes him.*

Sell. Nay, nay, gentlemen——

Acr. Mr. Hazard—

Neph. Let him call me to account; the reck'ning's paid.

Come, Dwindle—*Veni, vidi, vici.* Huzza! [*Exit.*

Sell. The fellow's mad. Does he often mistake thus?

Haz. His courage is a little hard mouthed, it runs away with him now and then; we must exchange a thrust or two; after bleeding he'll be cool.

Sell. The youth has a mind to shew himself; he is just launched into life.

Litt. He'll be soon launch'd out of it again, if he goes on in this way.

Haz. Pr'ythee let's have no more of him; I shall undertake to cure his fever.—But hark'e, friends, shall we meet at the old place this evening?

Sell. By all means; there will be deep play, I hear—my water-mark is but low; but I'll go as deep as I can. Will not Wilding be of our party too?

Haz. No, no; he has a love-matter upon his hands: but should he hear the rattling of the dice, it will bring him from the arms of the finest woman in the kingdom.

Sell. Pooh, pooh! you carry this too far.

Haz. I know him in this particular better than you; when he is in the circle of the gaming-table, 'tis all magic, he has not power to move; and I challenge the devil to bait his hook with a stronger temptation to draw him out of it.

Litt. Besides, among ourselves, what was once

with him occasional pleasure, is now become a necessary occupation. Jack Wilding has made a large gap in the widow's jointure.

Haz. Pshaw! rot your gossipping; don't abuse the generous wine you have been drinking, by mixing such scandal as this with it——stay till you get with your mistresses over their ratafia, and when you're maudlin, open the sluices of slander: however, we'll try the experiment; I'll meet you in the evening, and we'll write to him from the field of battle, and see to which his courage most inclines.

Acr. From love to gaming we'll his heart entice,
But woman will prevail——

Haz.——I say the dice. [Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter WILDING and PENELOPE.

Wilding.

THIS humour does become thee; I knew when
Thou didst consider what was offer'd thee,
Thy sullenness would shake off. Now thou look'st
Fresher than morning; in thy melancholy,
Thy clothes became thee not.

Pen. Y' are i' th' right;
I blam'd my taylor for't; but I find now,
The fault was in my countenance. Would we had

Some music; I could dance now; la, la, la.
[Sings and dances.]

Wild. Excellent! what a time shall I have on't?
Zounds, I am all on fire: how she glides!
Thou wot not fail, Pen?

Pen. This night——

Wild. At the hour of twelve.

Pen. But you must be as punctual i' th' conditions,
For my vow's sake; not speak a syllable.

Wild. I'll rather cut my tongue out than offend
thee;

Kissing is no language.

Pen. If it be not too loud;
We must not be seen together, to avoid
Suspicion; I would not for a world my cousin
Should know on't.

Wild. She shall die in ignorance.

Pen. No light, I charge you.

Wild. The devil shall not see us
With his sawcer eyes; “and if he stumble in
“The dark, there sha'not be a stone i' th' chamber
“To strike out fire with's horns.” All things shall be
So close, no lightning shall peep in upon us.
Oh, how I long for midnight!

Pen. I have a scruple.

Wild. Oh, by no means, no scruples now.

Pen. When you
Have your desires upon me, you will soon
Grow cold in your affection, and neglect me.

Wild. Why, hang me if I do, I'll love thee ever:

I have cast already to preserve thy honour;
Thou shalt be married in a fortnight, coz;
Let me alone to find thee out a husband
Handsome and fit enough; we will love then too.

Pen. When I am married?

Wild. Without fear, or wit;
Cum privilegio, when thou hast a husband;
Dost think I will forsake thee, Pen? 'twere pity
O' my life, sweet—I shall love thee the better;
And I must tell thee——

'Tis my ambition to make a cuckold,
The only pleasure o' th' world; that imagination
Sweetens the rest, and I do love it mainly, mainly.

Pen. 'Tis double sin.

Wild. 'Tis treble pleasure, wench;
But we lose time, and may endanger thus
My wife into a jealousy, if she see us.
Farewell, farewell, dear Pen; at night remember;
I wo'not lose my sport for half an empire!

Pen. Oh, my fears, your wife's return'd.

Wild. The devil she is! What shall we do, Pen?

Pen. I'll retire——but seem you more kind to her,
lest her suspicions should betray us.

Wild. I will do any thing—I have a holiday in my
heart—away, away. [Exit *Pen.*

Enter Mrs. WILDING.

Mrs. Wild. What, Mr. Wilding, so soon returned—
with smiles upon your face too—this is unusual; what
has happened, pray?

Wild. Why faith, wife, I have been reflecting on my conduct towards thee, and could I but hope you would forget my past behaviour, your life to come should be all sunshine.

Mrs. Wild. Is not this change too sudden to be certain? what has caused it, pray?

Wild. Conscience, conscience, my dear—though vanity and pleasure lulled it for a time, it has now awaked with all its stings, and shewn me all thy virtues, and my errors.

Mrs. Wild. Pray heaven that I am awake, for this is so like a dream.

Wild. Don't you be an infidel, wife, and reject the good now that is offered you. I tell you I'm another man; I am converted—when did you see me before with such pleasure in my face?

Mrs. Wild. Not this many a day—Has our cousin Penelope, husband, helped forward this conversion?—If she has, I am greatly obliged to her.

Wild. You are, indeed, wife, much obliged to her; she has done all in her power, I can assure you.

Mrs. Wild. Was not she here with you, at my coming in?

Wild. Yes, yes, she was here—she was indeed—was here with me—I have opened my mind to her—and with much zeal and friendship to you, she has confirmed me in my new faith.

Mrs. Wild. How much I am bound to her!

Wild. You are, indeed, wife: you have not a better friend in the world, I can tell you that—Now, what do you want?

Enter Page.

Page. Some gentlemen are waiting for you at the old place, and desire your company.

Mrs. Wild. You may tell them, that your master has forsaken his old haunts; he has seen the folly of them, and retires— [Servant going.

Wild. Hold, hold, wife—such a message as this will make us the talk of the town; *I won't be too particular*; I will steal myself gently from my friends and pleasures, and rather wean, than tear myself from them— Let them know I will attend them. [Exit Servant.

Mrs. Wild. As you please—Farewell, my penitent.

Wild. Farewell, my prudence—Had not this message come luckily to my assistance, my hypocrisy had been out of breath, and the devil had peeped out in spite of all the pains I had taken to conceal it. [Aside. [Exit Wilding.

Enter PENELOPE.

Pen. How have I enjoyed his confusion! Faith, cousin, you acted it bravely.

Mrs. Wild. I am sorry that I am forced to dissemble.

Pen. The best of us can, and must, upon proper occasions.

Mrs. Wild. Thou dost hit my instructions excellently.

Pen. I have made work for somebody—you have

put me upon a desperate service ; if you do not relieve me, I am finely served.

Mrs. Wild. All has succeeded to my wish ; thy place I will supply to-night ; if he observe all the conditions, I may deceive my husband into kindness, and we both live to reward thee better——Oh, dear coz, take heed, by my example, upon whom thou placest thy affections.

Pen. Indeed, my dear, you take this too deeply ; my life for it, but we shall reclaim him at last.

Mrs. Wild. That I almost despair of ; and not so much from his total disregard of me, and his pursuit of other women, as from his uncontrollable passion for gaming.

Pen. He has understanding with all his frailties ; and when those violent, irregular inclinations have had their scope, they must return to you.

Mrs. Wild. The passion of gaming, my dear, is not to be conquered even by the best understandings ; it is an absolute whirlpool ; wit, sense, love, friendship, and every virtue, are merely leaves and straws, that float upon the surface of the tide ; which, as they approach this gulf, are all drawn in, and sink to the bottom, as if they had never been.

Enter HAZARD.

Pen. Master Hazard——

Haz. Save you, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. You are welcome, sir.

Pen. He is a handsome gentleman.

[*Aside.*

Haz. Gone abroad?

Mrs. Wild. This moment left us, and, as I thought, to meet you, and his other sober friends.

Haz. I called upon him to attend him.

Mrs. Wild. The servant shall overtake him, and bring him back to you.

Haz. 'Tis too much trouble.

Mrs. Wild. What! for the best friend of the best of husbands! you wrong me, sir. [*Exit Mrs. Wild.*

Haz. Thou art the best of women, I am sure—
Ha! this is the very gentlewoman! in good time—
Now for my promise to old Barnacle—I'll accost her—What a pity it is this wench should be a morsel for that glutton Wilding? [*Aside.*

Pen. What a pity it is this fellow should be a gamester, and companion of my modest guardian?—How he eyes me! [*Aside.*

Haz. Your name is Penelope, I take it, lady?

Pen. If you take it, I hope you will give it me again.

Haz. What again?

Pen. My name.

Haz. Would not you change it, if you could?

Pen. For the better, surely.

Haz. Wilt thou dispose of thyself?

Pen. Can you tell me of any honest man whom I may trust myself with?

Haz. I'll tell thee a hundred.

Pen. Take heed what you say, sir,—a hundred honest men! why, if there were so many in the city,

'twere enough to forfeit their charter—but, perhaps, you live in the suburbs.

Haz. This wench will jeer me. [*Aside.*]

Pen. I hope you are not one, sir.

Haz. One of what?

Pen. One of those honest men you talked of so, to whom a maiden might intrust herself?

Haz. You have hit me, lady; come, I'll give thee counsel; and more, I'll help thee to a chapman too.

Pen. Alas! no chapmen now-a-days. Gentlemen are such strange creatures, “so infinitely cold, and “so void of every passion,” that a handsome woman cannot reach their pity—Why have you this “so “strange” antipathy to us? To what end will gentlemen come, if this frost holds?

Haz. You are witty; but I suppose you have no cause of such complaint—though some men may want warmth, there is no general winter; and if I guess aright, you'll never be frost-nipt, lady—at least you may prevent it.

Pen. Are you acquainted with any knight-errants, who would succour a distress'd damsel?

Haz. Yes, I know of one—ay, and a bold one too, that dares adventure with you; nay, will take you for better and for worse.

Pen. And is he young too?

Haz. Oh, very young.

Pen. And wise?

Haz. Not over wise.

Pen. Yourself, belike.

Haz. Indeed, not over wise, I must confess; nor yet so witless, lady.

Pen. Who is the hero? Is he of your school? Is it from you that he has learned to travel the fashionable road? Can he drink, dice, roar, rake and royster? scour the streets a-nights, draw forth his valour, which the bottle gives him, upon the feeble watch, *but flies when danger comes?* or is he one of those delicate superfine thin-spun animals, who vegetate indeed, but don't live; who, having refined away all taste and sensibility, stalk about at public places, with their eyes half shut and their mouths open, among a circle of the finest women, without hearing, seeing, tasting, understanding, or feeling any thing?

Haz. Hold, hold: you'll never get a husband, lady, if thus you let your tongue outrun your wit.

Pen. Is he to get then? I thought that he was ready caught, and you had brought him in a cage.

Haz. Will you accept him?

Pen. What in a poke? unseen, untry'd? Has the youth no name?

Haz. Ay, and a weighty one—'tis Barnacle; young, rich and handsome.

Pen. Was this at his entreaty, or your own kind charity?

Haz. Look'e, lady, lose not time in questions—husbands are not so plenty—Will you have him?

Pen. I thank you for your goodness, sir, and would advise you, if you have more of these commodities,

to take them to another market—I am supplied already—and so your servant. [Exit.

Haz. Gad-a-mercy! thou art a girl of spirit; supplied already? What can she mean?—not Wilding sure!—Impossible!—There is something about her that bespeaks her honest—I know not what to make of her——she may be a tumbler for all this.

Enter Page.

Page. My master, sir, will be at the appointment as soon as possible—he must call at his banker's first, and then he'll attend you. [Exit.

Haz. 'Tis well. This Penelope has touched me strangely——She is certainly——but what's that to me? I'll go, and drown thought at the gaming-table. [Exit.

SCENE II.

A Room in a Tavern. Enter SELLOWAY and Box-Keeper.

Sell. Was my message delivered to Wilding?

Box. Yes, sir; he will certainly attend you.

Sell. What gamesters have you within?

Box. The old set, sir.

Sell. What, no strangers?

Box. A country gentleman or two.

Sell. Will they make sport, think'st thou?

Box. The black-legs are about them: if they are

full of feathers (as I believe they are) we shall have good picking.

Sell. Well, do you set them a-going, and I'll be among 'em presently. [*Exit Box-Keeper.*

Enter HAZARD.

You are late, Hazard.

Haz. I could not come sooner; but don't you lose time—I must write a note, and will be with you at the table presently. [*Exit Sell.*
What is the meaning, I can't tell; but it hurts me to think that this foolish girl should so easily hearken to the lewd call of this fellow Wilding—this abandon'd, unfeeling fellow! Perhaps, 'tis his vanity—I did not perceive, 'till she was in danger, that the agreeable jade had given me any concern. What is the reason, that to be eminently vicious is the readiest road to a woman's heart; nay, even to the best of 'em? But I'll rattle this nonsense out of my head; I have a hundred in my pocket, and the dice are set a dancing. I'll strike up among 'em, and drown reflection——What, Wilding!

Enter WILDING.

Wild. Yes, you rogue, 'tis Wilding; the happy, gay, rapturous Wilding! Wish me joy, joy, man!

Haz. What, is your wife dead?

Wild. No, but my mistress is kind, which is very near as good a thing.

Haz. Thou art not mad?

Wild. No, no ; but I swell with imagination,
Like a tall ship bound for the fortunate islands ;
Top and top-gallant, my flags, and my figaries
Upon me, with a lusty gale of wind,
Able to rend my sails ; I shall o'er-run
And sink thy little bark of understanding,
In my career ; I fly before the wind, boy.

Haz. Pray Heaven rather
You do not spring a leak, and forfeit your
Ballast, my confident man of war ; I
Have known as stout a ship been cast away
In sight o' th' harbour.

Wild. The wench, the wench, boy !

Haz. The vessel you have been chasing——

Wild. Has struck sail ;
Is come in ; and cries, Aboard, my new lord of
The Mediterranean. We are agreed :
This is the precious night, Will ; twelve the hour,
That I must take possession of all, all,
You rogue you !

Haz. Pr'ythee descend from thy raptures, for the
gamesters are now coming, and we lose time.

Wild. The house fills a-pace. What are these, ha ?

Haz. Young Barnacle, and the vinegar-bottle his
man ; he has business of much import with you ; he
would be your rival with Penelope.

Wild. And may, if he pleases, when I have made
her fit for him. If I have the first glass, he shall
take the rest of the bottle, and welcome. But are
you in earnest ?

Haz. Pr'ythee talk to him, and hear his overtures—He may be worth your listening to. I'll to the table—if I win, I shall have no cause to repent my bargain with him; if I lose, by these hilts I'll make him the cause, and beat him. Pr'ythee keep him from me a few minutes, and then I'll relieve thee.

Wild. But how shall I do it?

Haz. Tell him any whimsical tale; he is so absurd, that it will go glibly down.

Wild. I'll try his swallow then.

Haz. Then luck with a hundred pieces! [*Exit.*

Wild. I must get a fool for her, and if this will bite, he is already got to my hands.

[*Takes a news-paper out of his pocket.*

Enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

Neph. Dwindle, that gentleman there is the guardian to the lady that I am to be in love with. Should not I shew away to him, and astonish him with a little learning, eh, Dwindle?

Dwin. Do, sir; let off a little Greek at him, and I warrant he'll be proud to call you cousin.

Neph. I am a little out of Greek at present, Dwindle; but for Latin, history, and philosophy—What is he reading, Dwindle?

Dwin. Ask him, sir.

Neph. *Quem librum legis, domine?*

Wild. Have you any commands with me, sir?

Neph. Pray, sir, what news is abroad these bad times?

Wild. Bad times, sir! when were we so great, so good, or so magnanimous? our ancestors were children to us; our exploits crowd so thick upon us, that we are obliged to send for the largest pyramid that can be got in Egypt to write 'em down upon, for the benefit of posterity—and I am now calculating what it will cost to bring it over.

Neph. A handsome penny, I warrant you. He's upon his fun, Dwindle, but I'll humour him. Where is the pyramid to be put, sir?

Wild. Upon Dover Cliff, sir; and the side facing the French coast is to be wrote in phosphorus, which will be read in the dark winter nights as far as Paris, with the same ease that you see what o'clock it is by St. Paul's at noon day.

Neph. Hark'e, Dwindle, this is very curious.

Dwin. Too curious to be true.

Neph. Have you any more news, sir? if you have, pray impart—I have a great appetite for news—vouchsafe me another slice.

Wild. A meal if you please—be there no more gentlemen to hear? 'Tis extraordinary fine news, in black and white, from *terra incognita*.

Neph. *Terra incognita*! What, has it no name?

Wild. It had, sir, but it is ashamed of it.

Neph. But what are they doing there?

Wild. Nothing at all—'tis inhabited by a nation without heads.

Neph. Without heads! Where are their eyes then?

Wild. They lost them first, sir, then their heads;

and they say the distemper, if not stopped, will spread over the rest of their body.

Neph. O wonderful ! a gentleman would not choose to travel there. How can they know one another without their heads, sir ?

Wild. They don't ; they are so changed, sir, they are neither known by themselves or other people ; having no heads, sir, they are continually playing at blindman's buff for the diversion of their neighbours.

Neph. *Monstrum ! horrendum ! informe ! ingens ! cui lumen ademptum*—ha, ha, ha ! Are there no politicians there ?

Wild. Did not I tell you it was a nation without heads ? all, all politicians.

Neph. *Qui capit ille facit.* I know your meaning ; your jest is not thrown away upon me.

“ *Wild.* Ha, ha ! extremely good ; apt and witty.”

Dwin. Now is your time—to him, sir.

Neph. I should be proud, sir, to have some nearer connections with a gentleman of your learning, and profound erudition.

Wild. I should be happy to know how, sir, and proud to be your friend and servant, in the true sense of the words.

Neph. Dwindle, my affairs are in a fine way. In every sense, I am your humble servant *in secula seculorum*. You must know, sir——

Wild. I'll know it by and by, if you please, for we are interrupted ; let us sport away a few pounds at

the table, and then I'll go to the tavern and be at your service *in secula seculorum*. [Exit.

Neph. Come along, Dwindle ; if my fortune goes on as swimmingly as she has begun, I shall make a rare night on't. If I get my mistress, and fill my pockets, we'll be as drunk as lords. Come along, Dwindle. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Draws, and discovers the Gaming-table. Gamesters at Play ; after some Time, and calling different Mains, enter LITTLESTOCK and ACRELESS.

Litt. A curse upon those reeling dice ! that last in
and in

Was out of way ten pieces. Canst lend me any
Money ? How have the dice dealt with thee ?

Acr. Lost, lost—I defy thee. If my luck recover
not,
I must be sober to-morrow. Damn'd, damn'd for-
tune !

Litt. Oh, for a hundred, and all made now.

Enter SELLOWAY.

Sell. Yonder's Hazard wins tyrannically, without
Mercy : he came in but with a hundred pieces.

Litt. I'll get a fancy presently.

Acr. And how thrive the bones with his lordship ?

Sell. His lordship's bones are not well set ; they are maliciously bent against him ; they will run him quite out of all.

Box-keeper calls again several Mains ; and after some warm Play, and much Money is won and lost, enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

Neph. More money ! Dwindle, call my uncle. I must have it for my honour : two hundred pieces more will serve my turn : in the mean time, I will play away, for want of cash, some superfluous things about me.

Dwin. By that time you are come to your shirt, I shall be with you.

Sell. He's blown up too. [Exit Dwin.

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. So, so, the dice in two or three such nights will be out of my debt ; and I may live to be a landlord again.

Sell. You are fortune's minion, Hazard.

Haz. You would seem to be no fool, because she dotes not

Upon you. Gentlemen, I must take my chance ; 'twas A lucky hundred pound ! Jack Wilding !

Enter WILDING, gnawing a Box.

What, eating the boxes ?

Wild. Chewing the cud a little ; I have lost all my money, Will ;

Thou hast made a fortunate night on't : wo't play
No more ?

Haz. 'Tis the first time I had the grace
To give off a winner—I would not tempt the dice.

Wild. What hast won ?

Haz. You do not hear me complain :
I have not been so warm these ten weeks.

Enter ACRELESS.

Wild. 'Tis frost in my pockets.

Acre. Master Hazard, I was afraid you had been
gone ; there's a fresh gamester come in, with his
pockets full of gold : he dazzles the gamesters, and
no man has stock to play with him.

Wild. The devil ! What is he ?

Acre. A merchant he seems ; he may be worth
your return.

Haz. Not for the exchange to-night, I am resolved.

Wild. Temptation ! now have I an infinite itch to
this merchant's pieces.

Haz. Thou wo't venture again then ?

Wild. I would if I could—but what do I forget ?
the wench, the fairy at home expects me.

Haz. I had forgot too : you wo' not play now ?

Wild. 'Tis now upon the time. [*Looking at his watch.*
Curs'd misfortune !

Haz. You will not stay then ?

Wild. Hum—I ha' lost my money, and may re-
cover a pretty wench. Which hand ? This wanton-
ness ; this covetousness ; money is the heavier. Will,

dost hear? I'll requite thy courtesy—lend me two hundred pounds to attack the merchant, and I will give thee good interest, and the best security.

Haz. What the dice and your old luck, Jack?

Wild. No, damn the dice—I will give it thee upon Pen's fortune; she is so loving that I can command her, and hers.

Haz. No matter for her fortune, I'll be contented with less: pay me with the girl herself,

Wild. How do you mean?

Haz. I'll be contented with her personal security.

Wild. Pr'ythee, be plain; I am in haste, and every rattle of the dice makes my heart beat to be at the merchant. What wouldst have? I'll agree to any thing, every thing—

Haz. The wench at home expects you.

Wild. Well—

Haz. Let me supply thy place.

Wild. Ha!

Haz. And here are the two hundred pieces.

Wild. What! no—no—

Haz. Nay, then your servant. [Going.

Wild. Stay, Will—Now, now the devil is at work with me—he has thrown out two baits, and I know not which to strike at.

Haz. I must take my money home—Yours, Jack, yours— [Going.

Wild. Stay, stay, thou shalt, Will—I love thee for thy generosity—Gold is a real good, woman an imaginary one—Besides, a losing gamester will make

but a cool lover ; thou art warmed with success, and deservest her—She will be mine another time. Thou shalt have her.

Haz. Shall I ?

Wild. Yes.

Haz. Done.

Wild. And done.

Haz. There are bills for your money.

Wild. To-morrow you'll thank me for't. Be secret, she'll never know thee, for our conditions are to [*Whispers him.*] neither light, nor—and she must need conceive 'tis I. Here's my key—It conducts you up the back way into the house—The servants are in bed, the first door on the right hand in the gallery leads to her apartment.

Haz. Are you in earnest ?

Wild. Have you wit to apprehend the courtesy ? Let me alone ; the wench and I shall meet Hereafter, and be merry : take my key—The merchant's money cools : away ; be wise, And keep conditions : I must to the gamester ; Farewell ; remember not to speak a word.

Haz. What, kiss and tell ; O, fie for shame.

Wild. Success to thee, Will.

Haz. And to thee, Jack. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Mrs. WILDING and PENELOPE, with Candles.

Pen. I wish it may answer your purpose.

Mrs. Wild. I cannot lose any thing by the trial ; the scheme is an innocent one, and if I can but rouse

my husband a little from his lethargy to the least sense of shame, who knows what may happen?

Pen. Hark!—are you sure you heard nothing?

Mrs. Wild. Nothing but your maid going to bed.

Pen. Not come yet!—It is past the time too—'Tis very strange.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed, my dear Pen, this lover of yours is most terribly unpolite.

Pen. My vanity is a little mortified at it, I must confess—A fine gallant, indeed!

Mrs. Wild. You see, child, this gaming! it destroys every other passion, good or bad—And what hopes, think you, have I to draw him from the spell, when even you, Penelope, with all your charms, cannot break the enchantment?

Pen. Who knows but there may be some better way to account for his stay? Why may not his conscience and his reason together have debated this matter a little seriously, and tho' they have been tolerably pliant heretofore, may grow resty at a crime of this nature.

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, let us not flatter ourselves too far: his reason and conscience are at present very good friends with his passions, and attend him with great alacrity in all his parties of pleasure.

Pen. Hark! I am sure I hear him.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed you are mistaken; 'tis your pride now that fancies so—Don't imagine that he'll cast a single thought upon you, while he has a single guinea in his pocket.

Pen. Ay, ay, that's your jealousy, cousin——But I know——Upon my word I hear him——Indeed I do——Hark! he's now unlocking the door.

Mrs. Wild. No, no—Hush—You are in the right—I hear my thief—he's coming the back way——Take the candles into your chamber, and be ready to come in at the signal. Bless me, how frightened I am!

Pen. Are you, my dear? Then do you take my part, and I'll take yours.

Mrs. Wild. Get you gone, you fool; I am not in a condition to trifle. I have more at stake than you imagine. [*Exit Penelope with candles.*] Now for it. I wish it was over. [*Sighs and retires.*]

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. I thought I never should have got hither.—But where I am I can neither feel nor tell. And, now I am here, I could almost wish myself back again. I have some qualms about this business; and were I not afraid of being laughed at, I would certainly return. But, thanks to the spirit of the times, gentlemen are much less afraid of being profligate than ridiculous. [*Feeling about.*]

Mrs. Wild. He has certainly been drinking, by his muttering so to himself. Now to catch my spark—Hem, hem!

Haz. There she is, and all my fears are fled——Hem, hem! [*They approach, and when they meet he offers to kiss her.*]

Mrs. Wild. How violent he is! I have not had such a favour from him these two years. [*Aside.*

Haz. How modest we are. [*She stamps.*

Enter PENELOPE, with lights.

What's the matter?—Ha! a light——

Who have we got here? We are discover'd.

Mrs. Wild. Discover'd—ha! [*Screams.*] Who are you?

Pen. What's the matter here?

Haz. Mrs. Wilding!

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard!

Pen. Your servant, good folks! [*Curtsy'ing.*] What, my good cousin and Mr. Hazard at hide and seek in the gallery, in my guardian's absence. You are a most generous gentleman indeed! you are for providing every way, I see, for distressed ladies.

Mrs. Wild. For Heaven's sake, Mr. Hazard, how got you here?

Haz. Upon my soul, madam, I scarce can tell you.

Mrs. Wild. You have squeezed my fingers most unmercifully.

Pen. So, so!

Haz. Upon my soul, madam, it was all a mistake. My errand at present was not with you, but with that lady.

Pen. With me! What business, pray? To pinch my fingers?

Haz. Here are my credentials. [*Shews a key.*] I was only to act by deputation from a certain friend of mine.

Pen. Which I suppose is a certain good guardian of mine.

Mrs. Wild. And who is most certainly my virtuous husband.

Haz. I am so astonished, I hardly know whether I am awake.

Pen. To be sure!—You unlock people's doors, get into their houses, seize upon their wives, and all in your sleep.

Haz. Ladies, though I may, perhaps, suffer in your opinions by my silence, yet I could wish, for my friend's sake, my own, and yours, that you would give me your pardon, and peaceably send me about my business; for indeed I am most sincerely ashamed and sorry.

Pen. Poor modest gentleman! had a housebreaker been caught in the fact, he would have made just the same apology. But no pardon from me, without a free and full confession.

Mrs. Wild. I can say nothing, Mr. Hazard, in your justification; but if you have a mind to make all the amends in your power, you will join with me in a plot I have just now thought of; for though Mr. Wilding may not have love enough to be jealous of me, I know he has too much pride to be easy, if he thought I was false to him; and what must he feel when he believes me innocently so, and knows himself to be the cause of it?

Pen. I adore you, my dear Mrs. Wilding, for the thought. I long to be revenged of him for his base design upon me; and, now you have him in your

power, if you don't torment him thoroughly, I'll never forgive you as long as I live.

Mrs. Wild. Let me alone for that. Mr. Hazard has only to behave as if he had succeeded in his design upon you. But let us confer notes together below stairs.

Haz. Ladies, you shall command my life, and my best services.

Pen. Best and worst, they are always ready, I'll say that for Mr. Hazard.

Haz. Indeed, lady, you know but half of me.

Pen. The worst half.

Haz. I fear so ; but let me assure you both, that with all my frailties, I am much happier in forwarding this scheme of virtue, than I should have been in the success of my folly.

Pen. Do you believe him ?

Mrs. Wild. I am confident of it. Don't mind her, Mr. Hazard, but follow me.

Pen. Mr. Hazard !

Haz. Madam !

Pen. The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be ;
The devil was well ; the devil a monk was he.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

*WILDING's House. Enter Mrs. WILDING and
BARNACLE.*

Barnacle.

BUT has not Master Hazard in no wise opened his business to you, lady, your husband, or your fair cousin ? I had his promise for it.

Mrs. Wild. What business, good sir ? I pray you, speak.—This interruption is unfortunate. [*Aside.*

Bar. Thus, then ; I have, lady, a longing, as it were, to be more nearly connected with your family. You must needs know what I would say.

Mrs. Wild. Indeed I am no scholar, and this is all Greek to me.

Bar. My nephew understands Greek, lady ; ay, and Latin too ; and geography, and poetry, and philosophy ; and is withal as valiant——

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis the peculiar blessing of the times ; our young men are so learned and brave, and our old ones so wise and virtuous, that we are the astonishment of the whole world. 'Tis the golden age, sir. But your business.

Bar. Vouchsafe me, lady, one plain answer to an honest question.—Has your fair kinswoman, the beautiful Penelope, yet transferred her affections to any one happy mortal ?

Mrs. Wild. If she had not, would Mr. Barnacle become a purchaser?

Bar. Me, madam? No, no no! Alas, Alas! my dancing days are over!—But for my nephew—Oh, that nephew of mine! You have seen him, and heard of him, surely, have you not, madam?

Mrs. Wild. My mind, of late, Mr. Barnacle, has had little attention, but to its own troubles.

Bar. Alack, alack, I know it well! You are much discoursed of, and pitied by the world, and I'll be bold to say, if there be any man that troubles you, or any that you would have talked withal, let him be who he will, I'll rid you of that care. He that shall offer to disturb you but in a thought, do you mark me, madam? I'll take an order with him—

Mrs. Wild. What will you do, sir?

Bar. Don't mistake me; I'll do nothing—But I'll send my nephew. He shall work him, and jerk him, I warrant you. You don't know how my nephew is improved since he came from the university: he is a perfect knight-errant, the very St. George for England!—Why, madam, he has had a pluck at the very flower of chivalry, ay, and cropped it too; the very Donzel del Phebo of the time; and all the roaring blades lower their topsails to him. I'll say no more—Name but the man whom you but frown upon, and I'll send my nephew to him.

Mrs. Wild. I thank you, sir; I have no enemy to exercise his prowess upon; my discontents are known

to flow from a nearer person—I am ashamed to say—

Bar. Your husband—Say but the word, and I'll send my nephew to him; and were he ten husbands he should mollify him. Don't spare him. Had you but seen him baffle a squire this morning!

Mrs. Wild. These praises of your nephew, Mr. Barnacle, are thrown away upon me; 'tis my cousin must be warmed with them; and here she comes—So I shall leave your eloquence to present the flower of chivalry to her, which I think would be an ornament to the fairest bosom in the kingdom.

Bar. Madam, you do my nephew honour; and when you are in the humour to have any man beaten, either in your own family or in the kingdom—I'll send my nephew to him.

Enter PENELOPE.

Mrs. Wild. Dear Pen, dispatch this old fool as fast as you can, and in the mean time I'll dispatch my page to fetch my wandering turtle home. *[Exit.*

Bar. Fair lady, I am your servant. *[Bows.*

Pen. Good sir, I am yours. *[Curtseys.*

Bar. I fear my visit may offend.

Pen. I am but ill at ease, indeed, sir, and most unfit for company.

Bar. What, so young and melancholy! Oh, 'tis a pity!

Pen. It is indeed, and yet I am melancholy.

Bar. And for what, fair lady?

Pen. For a gentleman.—What would you have a fair lady melancholy for?

Bar. I'll send my nephew to him——

Pen. To bring him to me?

Bar. Ay, bring him, and swing him, if you desire it. You can make him do any thing, madam. Say you but the word, and he'll take the Great Turk by the whiskers——Oh, my nephew's a pretty fellow!—Don't you know him, madam?

Pen. Not I, sir.

Bar. Not know my nephew! I'll send him to you.

Pen. What to do, sir?

Bar. He shall do any thing. The town's afraid of him.

Pen. Oh, pray, keep him from me then!

Bar. He'll hurt no woman. But for the men——

Pen. Can he make 'em better, sir? If he could, we should be much obliged to him.

Bar. And he shall, lady.

Pen. Then let it be quickly; for I'll stay till they are mended, before I think of a husband.

Bar. What think you, sweet lady, of the hero himself?

Pen. My thoughts must not run after such costly fruit.

Bar. My nephew is dying for you.

Pen. Poor young man!—But if we were both dying, my guardian would see us at our last gaspings before he'd consent.

Bar. Would he? Then my nephew shall talk to him. Let him alone to get the consent.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Your nephew, sir, is below, and begs to be admitted to the idol of his affections.

Pen. Shew the gentleman up. [*Exit Servant.*]

Bar. Idol of his affections! There's an expression for you.—My nephew is a fine scholar and a great hero. Here he is. I shall leave you together. Your servant, madam.

Enter Nephew and DWINDLE.

To her, nephew; now is your time. I have cleared the way; she's your own; you'll have a fine reception. I am glad to see you are half drunk—Be bold and conquer. [*Exit.*]

Neph. Ne'er fear me, uncle; when I am rocky, I defy any woman in Christendom. I have not been in bed to-night. When I am bosky, I never flinch.

Dwin. To her, to her, sir.

Neph. Shall I attack her with a little learning, Dwindle? If I could but put her into confusion, the town's my own.

Dwin. Give her a broadside then.

Neph. I had rather beat the watch than talk to her. My courage fails me, Dwindle.

Pen. I must send this fool a packing. [*Aside.*]—Do you trust yourself abroad, sir, without your un-

cle? You are very young, and there are a great many coaches and carts in this metropolis.

Neph. Coaches and carts, Dwindle! I am dumb, *et vox faucibus hæsit.*

Dwin. Give her one fire first.

Neph. I had rather go back again, Dwindle.

[*Going.*

Dwin. What, turn your back upon the enemy!

Neph. I cann't face her, *per deos immortales.*

Pen. If you have any matter to communicate, let me beg to know it immediately, for I'm in haste.

Neph. I had much matter to communicate, but your coaches and carts have drove it quite out of my head.

Pen. Poor gentleman! When you have recovered your senses, and the use of your tongue, return to me again, and I shall be at your service; in the mean time, I would recommend a gentle nap to you; and I'll pay a visit to my monkey: and so, sir, your servant. [*Exit.*

Neph. This is a fine reception, truly, Dwindle!

Dwin. So, so, sir.

Neph. I am in a damn'd passion, Dwindle. I'll go and kick her monkey.

Dwin. Leave that to me, sir, and I'll do his business.

Neph. But this must not pass so. What does my uncle mean, and Mr. Wilding mean, by sending me here to be laughed at? If I meet 'em, wo betide 'em.

G ij

I am so full, that unless I have some vent I shall burst. Don't speak to me, Dwindle, or I shall certainly fall upon you. Oh, for a man, woman, or child, now! — I must beat something. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Street. Enter HAZARD and WILDING.

Wild. How now, Will! Thou look'st desperately this morning. Didst sleep well to-night?

Haz. Do not enquire, but curse yourself till noon. I am charitable, I do not bid thee hang thyself; and yet I have cause to thank thee. I would not have lost the turn for all the money I won last night — Such a delicious theft!

Wild. I think so.

Haz. I found it so, and dare make my affidavit.

Wild. Thou didst not see her?

Haz. Nor speak to her. To what purpose?

Wild. Now do I
Grow melancholy.

Haz. If thou dost envy me,
There is some reason for't; thou dost imagine
I have had pleasure in my days; but never,
Never so sweet a skirmish! Not a kiss,
But had Elysium in't.

Wild. I was a rascal.

Haz. If thou didst know but half so much as I,

Or couldst imagine it, thou wouldst acknowledge
Thyself worse than a rascal on record.

Wild. Hold your tongue.

Haz. I have not words t' express, how soft, how
bounteous,
How every thing a man with full desires
Could wish a lady.

Wild. Pr'ythee, be quiet. But tell me, Will—

Haz. Don't question me farther.
It is too much happiness to remember :
I am sorry I have said so much.

Wild. Was I not curs'd,
To lose my money and such delicate sport ?

Haz. But that I love thee well, shouldst ne'er
enjoy her.

Wild. Why ?

Haz. I would almost cut thy throat.

Wild. You would not.

Haz. But take her ; and if thou part'st with her
one night more for less than both the Indies, thou'lt
lose by her. She has paid me for my service ; I ask
nothing else.

Wild. If she be such a precious morsel, Will,
I think you may be satisfied.

Haz. Take heed,
And understand thyself a little better.
I think you may be satisfied—With what ?
A handsome wench ! 'Tis heresy ; recant it ;
I never shall be satisfied.

Wild. You do not purpose
A new encounter.

Haz. For thy sake,
'Tis possible I may not: I would have
My game kept for me. What I have done, faith,
Was upon your entreaty; if you have
The like occasion hereafter, I
Should have a hard heart to deny thee, Jack.

Wild. Thou hast fir'd my blood!—That I could
call back time,
To be possess'd of what my indiscretion
Gave up to thy enjoying! But I am comforted,
She thinks 'twas I; and we hereafter may
Be free in our delights—Now, sir, the news
With you?

Enter Page.

Page. My mistress did command my diligence
To find you out, and pray you come to speak with
her.

Wild. When I am at leisure.

Page. 'Tis of consequence.

Wild. Is Penelope with her?

Page. Not when she sent me forth.
Shall I tell my mistress you will come to her?

Wild. How officious you are for your mistress, sir-
rah!

What, said she I came not home all night?

Page. Nothing to me. But my eyes ne'er beheld
her look so pleasantly.

Wild. Well, well, say I'll come. [Exit Page.

Haz. Now, farewell, Jack. I need not urge your secrecy touching your mistress—I must laugh at thee, and heartily, ha, ha, ha!—So, farewell, farewell, Jack, ha, ha, ha! [Exit.

Wild. To say the truth, I have shewed myself a coxcomb. A pox o' play, that made me double loser!—For aught I know, she may never admit me to such a turn again—and then I ha' punished myself ingeniously—Oh, fool, fool, fool! [Exit.

SCENE III.

WILDING'S House. Enter Mrs. WILDING, and
PENELOPE.

Mrs. Wild. Is he coming, say'st thou?

Pen. I saw him turn at the corner of the square.

Mrs. Wild. Is he alone?

Pen. Alone, and seems disordered: with his eyes upon the ground, and his arms folded thus, he walks by starts, and shews all is not right within.

Mrs. Wild. Now comes the trial—Hark! I hear him. You must away. Now for it. [Exit Pen.

Enter WILDING.

So, my good penitent man, I find your conscience was sincere; you have at last taken a farewell to your follies, but such dear friends you were, you took up all the night in parting.

Wild. I have bid farewell to them for ever. It was the last effort of expiring passion; but 'tis gone, and now I'm a new man—Heigho! [*Sighs.*

Mrs. Wild. Why do you sigh, husband? How d'ye, sweetheart? [*Smiling.*

Wild. Well, but a little melancholy. You look more sprightly, wife; something has pleas'd you.

Mrs. Wild. It has indeed; and if it be no stain To modesty, I would enquire how you Sped the last night.

Wild. I lost my money.

Mrs. Wild. I don't mean that. [*Smiling.*

Wild. Don't mean that?—I am not betray'd, I hope!

What do you mean?

Mrs. Wild. Y'are a fine gentleman!

Wild. 'Tis so; could she not keep her own counsel? [*Aside.*

Mrs. Wild. And have behav'd yourself most wittily, And I may say most wrongfully: this will Be much for your honour, when 'tis known.

Wild. What will be known?

Mrs. Wild. Do you not blush? Oh, fie! Is there no modesty in man?

Wild. Riddle my riddle my re—Pox of your ambiguities: what would you have?—I would not yet seem conscious.

Mrs. Wild. 'Tis time then to be plain; it was a wonder

I could be so long silent : did you like
Your last night's lodging ?

Wild. Very, very well ;
I went not to bed all night.

Mrs. Wild. Not to bed all night !—Think again,
my dear—your mem'ry may fail you.

Wild. What do you mean ?—I say I have not been
in bed to-night ; and had you any eyes but jealous
ones, you'd see by mine I have not slept to-night.

Mrs. Wild. Look at me, husband.

Wild. So I do—there ! there ! there !—What
mummery's this ?

Mrs. Wild. Now tell me—do you feel no small
compunction at thus looking in my injured face ?

Wild. A pox upon these stale expostulations ; must
I ever be dinned with them ? and cann't my refor-
mation work a change in you ?—thou art the strangest
woman——

Mrs. Wild. Soft, soft, my good husband—Did not
you meet Penelope last night ?

Wild. No ; I met no Penelope last night.

Mrs. Wild. And were you not to meet her ?—
Speak, my dear.

Wild. Pr'ythee, let me alone, my head aches.

Mrs. Wild. No, no, 'tis my head that aches—Did
you not pass the night, the live-long night, in wan-
ton, stolen embraces.

Wild. Refuse me if I did.

Mrs. Wild. You did not lie with Mrs. Penelope,
my kinswoman ?

Wild. Cuckold me, if I did. I swear——

Mrs. Wild. Come, come, don't swear—but 'twas no fault of yours, no fault, no virtue—but this is no time to expostulate these actions—in brief, know 'twas my plot. [Smiling.

Wild. What plot?

Mrs. Wild. Yes, yes, my plot, my dear. [Smiling.

Wild. My plot, my dear! what do you smirk and giggle at?—Leave your idiot tricks, and tell me what you mean.

Mrs. Wild. You are so testy—but I shall please you.

Wild. Shall you? I wish you would——

Mrs. Wild. Thus then—I have with sorrow long observed which way your warm affection moved, and found it would be in vain with open power to oppose you; I therefore worked by stratagem—I got the secret of your meeting, and I wrought so with my honest cousin, to supply her wanton place, that with some shame, at last, I might deceive your hard heart into kindness.

Wild. That, that again, sweet wife; and be a little Serious—Was it your plot to excuse your cousin, And be the bedfellow?

Mrs. Wild. 'Twas indeed, my dear.

Wild. 'Twas in hell, my dear.

Mrs. Wild. Bless me!

Wild. I am fitted, fitted with a pair of horns Of my own making!

Mrs. Wild. What, do you take it thus?



THE GANDIST
was soon fitted with a pair of
of my own making.

Wild. Cuckold me, if I did. I swear——

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Wild. What, do you take it thus?



THE GAMESTERS.
*Wid. I am fitted with a pair of horns
of my own making.*
Act 4. Scene 2.

Smirke pinx^t

Neagle sculp.

London. Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand, June 9 1792.

Should you not rather thank, and think upon
That providence, that would not have you lost
In such a forest of loose thoughts. Come, be
Yourself again; I am your handmaid still;
And have learn'd so much piety to conceal
Whatever should dishonour you.

Wild. It buds——

It buds already! I shall turn stark mad——

Horn mad!——

Mrs. Wild. What ails you? Are you vex'd
Because your wantonness has thriv'd so well?

Wild. Well with a vengeance! And did you really
contrive the plot yourself?

Mrs. Wild. I did.

Wild. You lie—I contriv'd some part of it—and can
you prove all this to be true?

Mrs. Wild. I can—witness those tender joys, which,
though not meant for me——

Wild. Oh, damn your description!
I am satisfied.

Mrs. Wild. You seem angry——I did expect your
thanks.

Wild. Yes, I do thank you, thank you heartily;
Most infinitely thank you.

Mrs. Wild. Doth this merit
No other payment but your scorn? Then know,
Bad man, 'tis in my power to be reveng'd;
And what I had a resolution
Should sleep in silent darkness, now shall look
Day in the face; I'll publish to the world

How I am wrong'd, and with what stubbornness
You have despis'd the cure of your own fame;
Nor shall my cousin suffer in her honour.
I stoop as low as earth to shew my duty;
But too much trampled on, I rise to tell
The world, I am a woman.

Wild. No, no; hark you,
I do not mock you. I am taken with
The conceit; what a fine thing I have made myself?
Ne'er speak on't, thy device shall take; I'll love thee,
And kiss thee for't; thou'st paid me handsomely:
An admirable plot, and follow'd cunningly.

Mrs. Wild. Then I'm happy, husband, if you're
sincere.

Wild. Oh, very sincere, and very happy.

Mrs. Wild. In earnest of that sincerity,
Vouchsafe the kiss you promised.

Wild. There—there. [Kisses her.

I'll see thee anon again; and lie with thee
To-night, without a stratagem. Penelope
Expects thee; keep all close: dear wife, no sen-
tences. [Hurries Mrs. Wilding off.

I'm trick'd and trimm'd at my own charges rarely!

[Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Street. Enter WILDING.

Wilding.

I am justly punish'd now for all my tricks,
 And pride o' th' flesh! I had ambition
 To make men cuckolds; now the devil has paid me,
 Paid me i' th' same coin; and I'll compare
 My forehead with the broadest of my neighbours:
 But, ere it spreads too monstrous, I must have
 Some plot upon this Hazard. He supposes
 He has enjoy'd Penelope, and my trick's
 To drive the opinion home, to get him marry her,
 And make her satisfaction. The wench
 Has oft commended him; he may be won to't.
 I never meant to part with all her portion:
 Perhaps he'll thank me for the moiety;
 And this dispos'd on, she's conjur'd to silence.
 It must be so.

Enter HAZARD.

Haz. Jack Wilding, how is't, man?
 How goes the plow at home? What says the lady
 Guinever, that was humbled in your absence?
 You have the credit with her, all the glory:
 What says she, Jack? Does she not hide her eyes,
 And blush, and cry, you are a fine gentleman!
 Turn a one side, or drop a handkerchief,

H

And stoop, and take occasion to leer
And laugh upon thee?

Wild. Nothing less: I know not
What thou'st done to her, but she's very sad.

Haz. I'll be hanged then.

Wild. Thou must imagine,
I did the best to comfort her.

Haz. She's melancholy
For my absence, man: I'll keep her company
Again to-night.

Wild. And nothing now but sighs, and cries I have
Undone her.

Haz. Ay, ay, the old cant—she's a fool.

Wild. To be plain,
Although she has no thought but I was her gallant,
You are the only argument of her sadness.

Haz. How can that be?

Wild. When I had merrily
Excus'd what had been done, she fetch'd a sigh,
And with some tears reveal'd her love to you;
That she had lov'd you long, but by this act
Of mine, d'ye mark? she was become unworthy
To hope so good a fortune; I cannot tell,
But she is strangely passionate.

Haz. For me?

Wild. Ay, for you.

Haz. Why, now I do recollect myself,
She has sometimes smil'd upon me.

Wild. Nay, believe it,
She is taken with thee above all the world.

Haz. And yet she was content you should—
'Bove all the world.

Wild. But 'twas your better fate
To be the man ; it was her destiny
Contrived it thus—Thou art a gentleman,
And must consider the poor gentlewoman.

Haz. What wouldst ha' me do ?

Wild. Make her amends.

Haz. What do you mean ?

Wild. Marry her.

Haz. Marry a strumpet !

Wild. You had first possession, and hadst thou married earlier, thou couldst but have had her first ; besides, none know but we ourselves, and we, for weighty reasons, must be secret.

Haz. Why, ay, that's true ; but then for weightier reasons, I must not marry her——

Wild. Come, come, thou hast a tender heart,
Heav'n knows ! she may be desperate.

Haz. A fair riddance ; we have enough o' th' tribe ;
I am sorry I cannot furnish her expedition with a pair of my own garters.

Wild. I know thou art more charitable ; she may prove a happy wife ; what woman but has frailty ?

Haz. Let her make the best on't ; set up shop i' th' Strand or Westminster, she may have custom.

Wild. She has a portion will maintain her like a gentlewoman, and your wife.

Haz. Where is't ?

H ij

Wild. In my possession ; and I had rather thou
Shouldst have it than another.

Haz. Thank you heartily.

A single life has single care : pray keep it.

Wild. Come, thou shalt know I love thee——thou
shalt have

More by thousands, than I resolv'd
To part with, 'cause I would call thee cousin too ;
Ten thousand pounds, Will, she has to her portion !
I hop'd to put her off with half the sum,
That's truth ;——some younger brother would have
thank'd me,

And given me my *quietus*—Is't a match ?

Haz. A pretty sum ! Ten thousand pounds will make
What's crooked, straight again.

Wild. Th'art in the right ;
Or for the better sound, as the grammarians
Say, I will call it—fifty hundred pounds !
By'r lady, a pretty stock ; enough, an' need be,
To buy up half the women in a county.

Haz. Here's my hand ; I'll consider on't no farther ;
Is she prepar'd ?

Wild. Leave that to me.

Haz. No more.

Wild. I'll instantly about it.

Haz. Will you confirm this before witnesses ?

Wild. Bring a hundred—bring them presently.

Haz. I'll follow you.

Wild. Now I'm a little easy—

The bitt'rest pill, when gilded, will be swallow'd.

[*Exit Wild.*

Haz. Ha, ha!

The project moves better than I expected;

What pains he takes out of his ignorance?

Enter BARNACLE.

Barn. Oh! sir, I am glad I ha' found you.

Haz. I was not lost.

Barn. My nephew, sir, my nephew.

Haz. What of him?

Barn. He's undone, he's undone! you have undone him.

Haz. What's the matter?

Barn. You have made him, sir, so valiant, I am afraid

He's not long liv'd: he quarrels now with every body:
And roars, and domineers, and shakes the pent-
houses.

What shall I do? I fear he will be kill'd:

I take a little privilege myself,

Because I threaten to disinherit him;

But nobody else dares talk or meddle with him:

Is there no way to take him down again,

And make him coward?

Haz. There are ways to tame him.

Barn. Now I wish heartily you had beaten him
For the hundred pounds.

Haz. That may be done yet.

Barn. Is't not too late? But d'ye think 'twill humble him?

I expect every minute he's abroad
To hear he has kill'd somebody, or receive him
Brought home with half his brains, or but one leg.

Haz. What would you have me do?

Barn. I'll pay you for't,
If you will beat him soundly, sir, and leave him
But as you found him; for if he continue
A blade, and be not kill'd, he won't escape
The gallows long; and 'tis not for my honour
He should be hang'd.

Haz. I shall deserve as much
To lay this mettle, as I had to quicken it.

Barn. Nay, 'tis my meaning to content you, sir;
And I shall take it as a favour too,
If for the same price you made him valiant,
You will unblade him: here's the money, sir;
As weighty gold as t'other: 'cause you should not
Lay it on lightly: break no limb, and bruise him
Three quarters dead, I care not: he may live
Many a fair day after it.

Haz. You shew
An uncle's love in this; trust me to cure
His valour.

Barn. He's here; do but observe.

Enter Nephew.

And beat him, sir, accordingly.

Neph. How now, uncle?

Barn. Thou art no nephew of mine, th'art a rascal! I'll be at no more charge to make thee a gentleman: Pay for your dice and drinkings; I shall have The surgeon's bills brought shortly home to me; Be troubled to bail thee from the sessions; And afterwards make friends to the recorder For a reprieve; yes—I will see thee hang'd first.

Neph. And be at the charge to paint the gallows too;

If I have a mind, the waits shall play before me, And I'll be hang'd in state, three stories high, uncle: But first I'll cut your throat.

Barn. Bless me! defend me.

Enter ACKRELESS, SELLOWAY, and LITTLESTOCK.

Acr. How now, what's the matter?

Sell. Master Barnacle!

Barn. There's an ungracious bird of my own nest, Will murder me.

Litt. He wo't not sure?

Haz. Put up, And ask your uncle presently forgiveness; Or I will huff thee.

Neph. Huff me?—I will put up At thy entreaty.

Haz. Gentlemen, you remember This noble gallant.

Acr. Cousin of yours, I take it.

Haz. A fine cousin! He lent me in your company A box o' th' ear.

Neph. No, no, I gave it,
I gave it freely; keep it, never think on't;
I can make bold with thee another time;
Would it had been twenty.

Haz. One's too much to keep.
I am a gamester, and remember always
My debts of honour—First, the principal—

[*Strikes him.*
And this for the use— [*Strikes him again.*

Neph. Use! Wouldst th'adst given it my uncle.

Haz. They have cost him already two hundred
pounds

And upwards, shotten herring, thing of noise!

Neph. Oh, for my man Dwindle,
And his basket-hilt now! my uncle shall rue this.

Haz. Down, presently, and before these gentlemen;
Desire his pardon.

Neph. How! desire his pardon?

Haz. Do it I say.

Neph. I will ask his pardon; I beseech you, un-
cle——

Haz. And swear.

Neph. And do swear——

Haz. To be obedient, never more to quarrel.

Neph. Why, look you, gentlemen, I hope you are
persuaded,
By taking this so patiently, that I am
Not over valiant.

Barn. I suspect him still.

Neph. Indeed you need not, uncle.

Haz. If ever he prove rebellious, in act
Or language, let me know it.

Neph. Will you not give
Me leave to roar abroad, a little, for my credit?

Barn. Never, sirrah; now I'll tame you.
I thank you gentlemen; command me for
This courtesy.

Neph. 'Tis possible I may
With less noise grow more valiant hereafter:
'Till then I am in all your debts.

Barn. Be rul'd,
And be my nephew again: this was my love,
My love, dear nephew.

Neph. If your love consist
In kicking, uncle, let me love you again.

Barn. Be silent, sirrah.

Neph. I am dumb.

Acr. Then his uncle paid for't?

Haz. Heartily, heartily.
Whither are you going, gentlemen?

Acr. As you shall lead us, Hazard.

Haz. 'Tis lucky then;
Will you be witnesses to a desperate
Bargain I mean to drive within this hour?
No less than bartering for my liberty.

Sell. The devil! not be married, sure?

Haz. 'Tis even so—and were I sure that this my
valiant friend [*To Nephew.*] would not be angry at
my choice, I'd tell you who was the maid elect.

Neph. Choose where you list; I'll ne'er be angry

more, nor woo again ; I have had of both my *quantum sufficit*.

Haz. Her name's Penelope.

Neph. Take her, and welcome ; she'll pay you in the coin you've favour'd me with.

Barn. May you win and wear her, Mr. Hazard ; and since my nephew merits not the maid, I wish you and her happiness.

Haz. Thanks, Mr. Barnacle—I will away to Wildings, and prepare for your reception—will you follow me ?

Litt. We will. [Exit Hazard.

Barn. What say you, gentlemen ? shall we drink this couple in a glass of sack, and then to wish 'em joy ?

Acr. Agreed.

Neph. I'm for any thing. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

WILDING'S House. Enter Mrs. WILDING and PENELOPE.

Pen. Why, you would not have me encourage this Hazard ?

Mrs. Wild. Indeed but I would.

Pen. What a gamester ! a profligate ! No, no, thanks to youth, good spirits, and a tolerable person, not so desperate as that, Mrs. Wilding.

Mrs. Wild. His gaming is accidental—A younger

brother, and bred to no business, naturally leads to the dice for his supplies. I know he is tired of the company he has kept; his honour is as yet unimpeached, and with your fortune what can either of you want, or desire farther?

Pen. Indeed, I dare not think of it. *And yet, cousin, you might persuade me to any thing. I have the highest opinion of you. Give me a little time——prejudices are hard to conquer, and yet who knows——Bless me! he's here.*

Enter HAZARD.

Mrs. Wild. Mr. Hazard, I have pleaded hard for you, and promised much for you. You must now try the cause yourself.

Haz. I am indebted to you—all things succeed beyond your thought—pray give me a little opportunity with your kinswoman.

Mrs. Wild. I will withdraw. [Going.]

Pen. *Don't go without me cousin, you know I have business with you.*

Mrs. Wild. *And so has that gentleman, my dear; and he is in such haste, poor man! he can't stay: finish with him, and I'm at your service.* [Exit.]

Haz. I know not how to woo her——
Sweet lady——

Pen. Your pleasure, sir?

Haz. Pray, let me ask you a question——
If you had lost your way, and met one,

A traveller like myself, that knew the coast
O th' country, would you thank him to direct you ?

Pen. That common manners would instruct.

Haz. I think so.

Pen. But there are many ways to the wood.

Haz. And which
Would you desire ; the nearest path and safest,
Or that wick leads about ?

Pen. Without all question
The nearest and safest.

Haz. Can you love then ?

Pen. *That is the nearest indeed. If you are upon that
road, I could wish you would go a little about.*

Haz. No, no, madam ; you have said, and I must have
an answer.

Pen. You are in a violent hurry, sure. What answer
would you have, sir ?

Haz. A direct one. Can you love ?

Pen. Pray give me a little time.

Haz. Not a moment. Can you love, I say ?

Pen. I were a devil else.

Haz. And can you love a man ?

Pen. Bless me ! you frighten me out of my wits.
What did you say, sir ?

Haz. Can you love a man ?

Pen. A man ! what else, sir !

Haz. Y' are so far on your way. Now love but me,
Y' are at your journey's end ; what say you to me ?

Pen. Nothing, sir.

Haz. That's no answer ; you must say something.

Pen. *I wish you'd guess, and not compel me to speak.*

Haz. D'y' hear, lady?

Setting this foolery aside, I know

You cannot choose but love me.

Pen. Why?

Haz. I have been told so.

Pen. You are easy of belief ;

I think I should be best acquainted with

My own thoughts, and I dare not be so desperate

To conclude.

Haz. Come, come ; y' are a dissembling gentle-
woman.

I know your heart ; you have lov'd me a great while.

What should I play the fool for ? If you remember,

I urg'd some wild discourse in the behalf

Of Barnacle ; it was a trial of thee ;

That humour made me love thee ; and since that, thy
virtue.

Pen. Indeed, sir ?

Haz. Indeed, sir ? why, I have been contracted to
thee.

Pen. *The deuce you have!* How long ?

Haz. This half hour ; know thy portion, and shall
have it.

Pen. Strange!

Haz. Nay, I'll have thee too.

Pen. You will ? *How can I help myself?*

Haz. You cannot help it ; thy kind cousin will have
it so :

'Tis his own plot, to make thee amends ; is't not
Good mirth ? but 'tis not love to thee or me ;
But to have me possess he is no cuckold :
I see through his device, thou art much beholden to
him :

He meant to have put thee off with half thy portion ;
But that, as things have happen'd, we must keep
secret.

Say, is't a match ? I have ten thousand pounds too,
“ Thank the dice : ” let's put our stocks together.
We have love enough—happiness must follow.

Pen. *Pray, stop, sir, we're at our journey's end.*
My guardian's here.

Enter WILDING.

Wild. So close ! I'm glad on't. This prepares Will
Hazard,
And my young cousin. A word, Penelope.

Haz. Now will he make all sure.

Wild. You us'd me coarsely,
But I have forgot it. What discourse have you
With this gentleman ?

Pen. *Very strange discourse.* He seems to be a suitor.

Wild. Entertain him, d'y' hear ; you may do worse ;
Be rul'd.

'Twas in my thought to move it ; does he not
Talk strangely ?

Pen. I told you he did.

Wild. *Was that all ?*

Pen. *What ?*

Wild. Nothing. Let me counsel you
To love him; call him husband.

Pen. I resolve
Never to marry without your consent, *since I have got*
my own. [Aside.] [They talk apart.

Enter ACRELESS, LITTLESTOCK, and SELLOWAY.

Haz. Gentlemen, welcome.

Pen. If you bestow me, sir, I will be confident
I am not lost; I must confess I love him.

Wild. No more then; lose no time. Kind gentlemen,

Y'are come most seasonably to be the witnesses
Of my consent. I have examin'd both
Your hearts, and freely give thee here my kinswoman:
No sooner shall the church pronounce
You married, but challenge what is hers.

Haz. Ten thousand pound.

Wild. I do confess it is her portion.
You sha'not stay to talk. Nay, gentlemen,
Pray see the business finish'd.

Acr. We'll attend him.

Wild. The lawyer with his papers are within;
I've sign'd and seal'd the contract, and with it
Give up all my right and guardianship
To this my friend. [To Haz.

Haz. Which I with joy accept of—

Pen. And I for better and for worse.

Haz. Sweet Penelope, [Takes Pen. hand.
Be you the witness. [Exit with Pen.

Wild. So, so ; this will confirm him in the opinion,
Penelope was the creature he enjoyed,
And keep off all suspicion of my wife,
Who is still honest, in the imagination
That only I embrac'd her : all's secure,
And my brow's smooth again. Who can deride me,
But I myself ? Ha ! that's too much ; I know it ;
And spite of these tricks, am a Cornelius.
Cannot I bribe my conscience to be ignorant ?
Why then I ha' done nothing : yes, advanc'd
The man, that grafted shame upon my forehead :
Vexation ! parted with ten thousand pound,
And am no less a cuckold than before !
Was I predestin'd to this shame and mockery ?
Where were my brains ? Yet why am I impatient ?
Unless betray'd, he cannot reach the knowledge ;
And then no matter——yes, I am curst again :
My torment multiplies ; Penelope
Will clear herself, and then that ruins all !
I would she had been strumpeted. I am lost,
And must be desperate——Kill him ? No——my wife.
Not so good——death is over black and horrid ;
And I am grown ridiculous to myself.
I must do something.

Enter BARNACLE and Nephew.

Barn. Master Wilding, welcome—I have not seen
you a great while.

Wild. Then I have been happy a great while.
Do you know me ?

Barn. Know you ?

Wild. They say I am much alter'd of late.

Barn. There is some alteration in your forehead.

Wild. My forehead !

Barn. 'Tis not smooth enough—you're troubled—
Is your wife within ?

Wild. What would you with her ?

Barn. I know the matter that's a brewing.

Neph. *Et ego.*

Barn. You have it here, Mr. Wilding.

[*Pointing to his head.*]

Wild. The devil !——Do you see 'em ?
Have they broke the surface ?

Barn. I mean Mr. Hazard's business.

Wild. I mean that too. My head's a torment to me.

Neph. What would you give now, Mr. Wilding, to
be of the nation without heads ?

Wild. Would I could change conditions with these
fools ; they are not now troubled with being cuckolds.

Enter Mrs. WILDING.

Mrs. Wild. Gentlemen, your servant.

Barn. Joy, joy to you, Mrs. Wilding.

Wild. Wife, you are a whore ; you shall know
more hereafter—I must go live in the forest.

Mrs. Wild. And I i' th' common.

Wild. She'll turn prostitute !

Enter HAZARD, PENELOPE, ACRELESS, &c.

Haz. Your leave, gentlefolks ; who wishes us joy !

Barn. Married?

Haz. Fast as the law can tie us;
The priest must bless the knot.

Acr. We are witnesses.

Haz. Cousin, ten thousand pound; and lady, now
I must thank you for this among the rest. Look then
with an eye of love upon me.

Wild. No matter, she'll love thee afterwards. An'
she do not, she can but cuckold thee; there be more
i' th' parish, man.

Mrs. Wild. In our parish, husband?

Wild. I'll be divorc'd now.
Wife, you're a whore.

Haz. Ho, there! no big words; come,
We must tell something in your ear: be merry;
You are no cuckold, make no noise. I know
That's it offends your stomach.

Wild. Ha!

Haz. I touch'd not her, nor this, with one rude action.
We'll talk the circumstance another time:
Your wife expected you; but when I came,
She had prepar'd a light, and her cousin here,
T' have made you blush, and chide you into honesty:
Seeing their chaste simplicity, I was won
To silence, which brought on my better fortune.

Wild. Can this be real?

Mrs. Wild. By my hopes of peace
I' th' t'other world, you have no injury:
My plot was only to betray you to
Love and repentance.

Pen. Be not troubled, sir ;
I am a witness of my cousin's truth ;
And hope you'll make all prosper, in renewing
Your faith to her.

Haz. Be wise, and no more words :
Thou hast a treasure in thy wife ; make much of her.
For any act of mine, she is as chaste
As when she was new-born. Love, love her, Jack.

Wild. I am asham'd : pray give me all forgiveness.
I see my follies——Heaven invites me gently
To thy chaste bed. Be thou again my dearest :
Thy virtue shall instruct me. Joy to all.

Haz. These be love's miracles : a spring-tide flow
in every bosom.

Barn. May ease, health, happiness attend you, lady.

Pen. From you, sir, 'tis a double compliment.
Have I your pardon, sir, for my refusal of the honour
of your nephew's hand ?

Barn. You have.

Neph. And mine too, lady, with thanks to the bargain.

Wild. To-day I'll feast you all ; and, wife, be this
our bridal day : let us begin new joys with these our
happy cousins.

Mrs. Wild. My joys are at their full ; and, dear Penelope, my heart o'erflows with love, delight, and gratitude.

Pen. May I deserve your friendship, and follow
your example.

Haz. Be witness, gentlemen, that wedded here,

wedded for ever, I no more shall follow that fickle harlot Fortune—I renounce my follies; fly to peace, content, and love.

From riot, care, intemperance, and vice;

And from the fountain head of all—the dice.

Sell. The sinner preaches, Wilding; but his lectures will make few penitents.

Wild. I'm sorry for't——

I own myself a convert to these truths,
And wish that you had felt 'em. This my pilot,
My prudent pilot, steers me safe thro' storms,
Thro' rocks and quicksands, to a happier coast:

The syren's voice shall charm my ear no more;

With joy I quit that treach'rous, fatal shore;

Where a friend's ruin is by friends enjoy'd,

And ev'ry virtue is by turns destroy'd.

[Exeunt omnes.]



EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND, AND SPOKEN BY MRS.
WILDING.

*My conduct now will every mind employ,
And all my friends, I'm sure, will wish me joy :
'Tis joy indeed, and fairly worth the cost,
To've gain'd the wand'ring heart I once had lost.
Hold, says the prudish dame, with scornful sneer,
I must, sweet madam, stop your high career ;
Where was your pride, your decency, your sense,
To keep your husband in that strange suspense ?
For my part, I abominate these scenes——
No ends compensate for such odious means :
To me, I'm sure—but 'tis not fit to utter——
The very thought has put me in a flutter !*

*Odious, says Miss, of quick and forward parts ;
Had she done more, she'd given him his deserts :
O, had the wretch but been a spark of mine,
By Jove, I should have paid him in his coin.*

*Another critic ventures to declare,
She thinks that cousin Pen has gone too far :
Nay, surely, she has play'd a gen'rous part ;
A fair dissembler, with an honest heart.
Would any courtly dame in such a case,
Solicit, get, and then resign the place ?*

*She knew, good girl, my husband's reformation,
Was (what you'll scarce believe) my only passion :
And when your scheme is good, and smart, and clever,
Cousins have been convenient persons ever.
With all your wisdom, madam, cries a wit,
Had Pen been false, you had been fairly bit :
'Twas dangerous, sure, to tempt her youth with sin ;
The knowing ones are often taken in.
The truly good ne'er treat with indignation
A natural, unaffected, generous passion ;
But with an open, liberal praise, commend
Those means which gain'd the honourable end.*

*Ye beauteous, happy fair, who know to bless,
Warm'd by a mutual flame, this truth confess ;
That should we every various pleasure prove,
There's nothing like the heart of him we love.*

THE END.

Shirley, James, / Johnson, Charles / Garrick, David

The gamesters a comedy

London 1792

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